# *The* AGRARIAN REVOLUTION IN ROUMANIA

*By*

IFOR L. EVANS

*The following are the chief contents:*

¶ THE AGRARIAN HISTORY OF ROUMANIA. ¶ AGRARIAN CONDITIONS ON THE EVE OF REFORM. ¶ THE NEW AGRARIAN LAWS AND THEIR APPLICATION. ¶ AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION SINCE THE WAR. ¶ ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE REFORM. ¶ GENERAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE REFORM. ¶ THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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# THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION IN ROUMANIA

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# *The* AGRARIAN REVOLUTION IN ROUMANIA

*By*

IFOR L. EVANS

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is by no means of recent origin, and one may perhaps be pardoned for saying of this peasant revolution what one of the greatest of French historians said of the French Revolution of 1789,

qu'il n'y eut jamais d'événements plus grands, conduits de plus loin, mieux préparés et moins prévus[1].

The coming of the peasant to his own has destroyed for ever the very basis of the old social order in Eastern Europe; yet prior to the World War but few members of the former governing classes realized how near they stood to the final *dénouement*. In the light of the ultimate sequel, however, it appears to us that the inevitability of the whole process should have been apparent for generations. The war indeed hastened, but it did not cause the Agrarian Revolution.

From the economic point of view a study of the movement is of the greatest interest, for Eastern Europe was formerly one of the great granaries of the world. In the last five years before the war Russia alone contributed no less than $4\frac{1}{4}$ million metric tons of wheat and wheat-flour annually to international trade, while Roumanian exports averaged nearly 1·4 million tons. Russia, indeed, was the greatest wheat-exporting country in the world and furnished a total not far short of that of the United States of America and Canada combined[2]. Roumania occupied the fifth place for wheat, and came third as a maize-exporting country with an average of nearly one million tons—a total within measurable distance of that of the United States[3]. Since the war, however, exports from these countries have been almost negligible in comparison. In these circumstances the future of agricultural production is of more than merely local interest, and the probable consequences of the far-reaching changes that have taken place in the rural life of Eastern Europe

[1] Alexis de Tocqueville: *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*.
[2] Approximately $4\frac{1}{4}$, as against $4\frac{3}{4}$ million metric tons.
[3] The Argentine exported nearly 3 million tons of maize: the U.S.A. just over, and Roumania just under, one million tons.

merit the closest attention from the economic no less than from the social point of view.

It must, of course, be admitted that it is as yet too early to formulate any very definite conclusions as to the influence of this particular factor, as Agrarian Reform has coincided with a vast political upheaval which is in part the cause and in part the consequence of an almost complete collapse in political and economic organization. In the case of Russia in particular, fairly reliable information has only recently begun to come to hand, and some years must yet pass before it will be possible to view the problem in proper perspective. This fact, however, only adds to the importance of an investigation into the general trend of affairs in Roumania. At the same time it cannot be denied that, although great progress has already been made in that country in the direction of a return to more normal conditions, the period of time which has elapsed since the first application of the new agrarian legislation is too short to enable us to dogmatize as to the final results of the reform itself. It might, however, be argued that the analysis of an economic problem would be of no practical value if sufficient time were allowed for all the contributory factors to work themselves out to the full; for, in that unlikely event, the problem itself would long since have been relegated to the misty background of a distant past.

The modern Kingdom of Roumania, with an area of 114,343 square miles and a population of nearly sixteen millions, is perhaps worth some attention for its own sake; while its geographical position is one of considerable importance in the economics and politics of Eastern Europe. In a country where the rural inhabitants form from 80 to 90 per cent. of the total population, no question is quite so prominent as that of agricultural organization and production, while the Old Kingdom of Roumania, as we have already seen, was one of the great corn-exporting countries of the world. A study of the agrarian question in Roumania gains

still further in interest from the light which it may be expected to throw on somewhat similar developments in Russia. Although the time has not yet come for a comprehensive survey of the agrarian revolution in Eastern Europe as a whole, an investigation such as this may nevertheless be of service in the meantime as a preliminary study of a not unimportant side of one of the greatest social upheavals of modern times.

That the roots of the present lie deep in the past is fortunately by now a commonplace; and no excuse is needed for devoting a considerable amount of attention to the historical evolution of the agrarian problem in the territories which are now united in the modern Kingdom of Roumania. This is all the more the case in that it is believed that the subject has not yet been treated in any form in English; nor has an attempt as yet been made, in any language, to compare the development of events in all the Roumanian lands, which were so long divided among different sovereignties of widely different political and social structure.

It is not, however, enough to place the subject in its proper historical setting; for not only is the historical evolution of a people largely determined by its geographical *milieu*, but, in addition, changes in economic structure will themselves produce widely different results in different physical settings. An attempt has, therefore, been made to place this agrarian problem in space, as it were, as well as in time. A short account of the people, the land and the general economic technique—of the subject of economic activities, the object and the connecting link between the two—may be of use in the analysis of this, as in that of most other economic problems. It may be possible thus to make clear that legal and economic changes in the agrarian sphere which would almost certainly be disastrous in their effects if applied to the developed rural economy of the West, may be not only not harmful but positively beneficial in the totally different circumstances of Eastern Europe. In other words it is im-

perative that the Agrarian Revolution in Roumania should be judged in terms of the history and the geography of Roumania itself.

The statistical material upon which much of this work is based is for the most part collected together in a special statistical appendix. The excuse for the relatively large amount of space devoted to this side of the question is that it seemed not unimportant to discover, so far as possible, what the actual facts were. Indeed, an attempt has been made throughout to place this particular problem in its appropriate setting rather than to indulge in somewhat uncertain speculation, *in vacuo*, as it were, on agrarian reform in the abstract.

My debt to the works on general Roumanian history by the late Professor Xenopol of Jassy and by the distinguished Professor at the University of Bucarest, M. N. Jorga, is particularly apparent in the historical chapters which follow. Special thanks are due to the present Finance Minister of Roumania, M. Vintila J. C. Brătianu, and to the Roumanian Minister in London, M. Neculae Titulescu, for the great help they have given me in collecting much of the statistical information which is contained in this volume. While it is highly improbable that they will both agree with all my conclusions, I have to thank them very heartily for many most interesting conversations on the agrarian question in Roumania and for their unfailing kindness at all times. It is also a particularly pleasant task for me to express my gratitude to my friend, Mr D. N. Ciotori, for much invaluable assistance in preparing this book for the press, though for its many defects I alone am responsible.

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CAMBRIDGE,
*December*, 1923

# ROUMANIAN NAMES

A FEW indications as to the pronunciation of the Roumanian names and terms given in the text may not be out of place here.

ă is not unlike the *u* in *but*.

â has no exact equivalent in English, but is not unlike the *er* in *butter*.

au is pronounced as *ow*.

c is pronounced like *ch* in *church* when it precedes *e* and *i*. Otherwise it has the sound of *k*.

g when followed by *e* or *i* is pronounced as in *general*. Otherwise as in *great*.

î as *â*.

j as in English.

ş has the sound of *sh* in *shall*.

ţ has the sound of *ts*.

u has the sound of *oo* in *too*.

The Roumanian form of place-names is given throughout in the absence of any definite English form. The following table gives some equivalents for the most important of these.

| | |
|---|---|
| Braşov | Kronstadt. |
| Bucovina | Bukowina. |
| Cernauti | Czernowitz. |
| Cetatea Alba | Akermann. |
| Chişinau | Khishineff. |
| Constanţa | Constantza; Kustendje. |
| Dobrogea | Dobruja; Dobrudja. |
| Hotin | Khotin. |
| Nistru | Dniestr. |
| Oradea Mare | Grosswardein. |
| Satmar | Szatmar. |
| Sibiu | Hermannstadt. |
| Tighina | Bender. |
| Tisa | Theiss; Tisza. |

# GEOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

THE KINGDOM OF ROUMANIA, as established by the Treaty Settlement of 1919, is almost as large as the British Isles. Situated, roughly speaking, between latitudes 48½ and 43½ North; and between the 20th and 30th meridians East of Greenwich, it forms one of the most compact of all modern States, for its frontier is but 1783 miles long, as compared with an area of 114,343 square miles. For about two-thirds of its length the new frontier is formed by clearly-defined natural features. The river Nistru separates Roumania from Russia (or rather from the Ukraine) on the North-East, while the Danube provides a boundary with Jugoslavia and Bulgaria on the South. Between the latter country and the Province of the Dobrogea, however, a line of hills forms a rather less satisfactory frontier on the South-East. To the North the highlands of Maramureş and a tributary of the Prut mark the boundary with Czechoslovakia and Poland (Eastern Galicia) respectively; while the line separating Roumania from Hungary and Jugoslavia on the West runs through the Tisa plains a few miles away from the western ridge of the Transylvanian highlands. On the East the Black Sea coast extends for 277½ miles from the mouth of the Nistru to the south-eastern corner of the Dobrogea.

Greater Roumania lies East and West of the main chain of the Carpathians, which forms, as it were, the spinal column of the new State. This mountain range, however, is far from being so formidable a barrier as, for example, the Alps; for hardly anywhere do the highest peaks exceed 8000 feet in height, while the Olt, which is one of the principal rivers of the country, rises many miles on the Transylvanian side of the old frontier and cuts through the Southern Carpathians at the Turnu Rosu (Red Tower) pass to join the Danube near Turnu Magurele in the Old Kingdom. The Roumanian rivers, almost without exception, flow into the Danube. For the most part, however, the Transylvanian tributaries, the most important of which is the Mureş, flow westwards to

join the Tisa, while the chief rivers of the Old Kingdom, like the Olt, the Ialomiţa, the Siret and the Prut, flow down direct to the main artery from the North.

The physical structure of the country is much the same on both sides of the Carpathian highlands; and the rough division into mountain, hill and plain, which has so greatly determined the historical evolution of the Roumanian people, provides a useful guide to the main physical regions of the country.

The central mountain zone is known as the Moldavian Carpathians in the North, and as the Transylvanian Alps in the South. The northern peaks seldom reach 7000 feet, while the region as a whole is characterized by rolling uplands rather than by rugged peaks of truly Alpine grandeur. The same features characterize the Bihar massive, which formerly formed part of the main Carpathian highlands, but which has been separated from these in the course of ages by the depression of the great Transylvanian basin, drained by the river Mureş and, in the South-West, by the Olt. Protected on all sides by mountains, this central region of Transylvania provided an admirable refuge for the Roumanian people during the more troubled epochs of its history. The Transylvanian basin is composed of rolling country with dainty hills and fertile slopes and, despite the rigours of the winter and the great heat of the summer, offers a most favourable field for human activities.

The hill region of Wallachia, and of Moldavia West of the Siret, is in many respects very similar in structure to the Transylvanian basin; while between the Siret and the Prut, and even more between the Prut and the Nistru, the vast rolling country to the North gradually merges into the silent steppe-like plains of the South.

The great Danubian plains occupy the greater part of the old Principality of Wallachia and stretch away Eastwards, through the Bugeac zone of Southern Bessarabia, to join the vast steppes of the Ukraine.

The zones both of rainfall and of vegetation coincide in the main with these physical divisions. In the Carpathians, where there is a rainfall of over 35 inches annually, forests and rich mountain pastures of vast extent (called "poiana") limit the possibilities of agricultural production proper. In the hill region the annual rainfall is between 28 and 35 inches, and the importance of pasture makes of this a zone of mixed farming. In the Southern Steppes, on the other hand, the rainfall is in many districts less than 15 inches annually, and here again, natural characteristics largely circumscribe the direction of agricultural production.

On the western frontier of the new Kingdom there is a belt of flat country which really forms part of the "Pusta" of Eastern Hungary; while the Dobrogea, a curiosity from the geological no less than from the ethnological point of view, can perhaps best be regarded as a promontory of the Bulgarian plateau jutting northwards to the Danube delta.

Even this short summary will probably have brought out the great diversity which characterizes the geographical structure of Greater Roumania. While we reserve the detailed consideration of agricultural production for a later chapter, in order the more fully to elucidate the connection between the agrarian geography of the country and the predominant forms of land tenure, the physical basis of the national life must, of course, constantly be borne in mind if we would arrive at a proper understanding of the social history of the Roumanian people.

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# *Chapter One*

# The Agrarian History of Roumania

## I

I. The Origin of the Roumanian People
II. The Structure of Early Rural Society
III. An Outline of Political Events (1300–1812)
IV. The Growth of Serfdom
V. The Climax of Oppression
VI. The Russo-Turkish Protectorate

## § I

# THE ORIGIN OF THE ROUMANIAN PEOPLE

THE Provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia lie on the Southern highway from East to West—the line of so many barbarian invasions at a time when the glories of Byzance were beginning to fade and when the foundations of modern Europe were being laid. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that as late as the thirteenth century, when foreign oppression combined with an increase in the population to make the more adventurous spirits among the Roumanian people leave the wooded highlands of Transylvania—the cradle of their race—and seek a new home beyond the mountains, these rich lands should have been for the most part mere waste tracts, only broken here and there by such primitive settlements as had survived, thanks to their geographical situation.

The problem of the origin of this people is as obscure as it is fascinating. Conscious of their latinity—which is attested to by their physical characteristics no less than by their language, with its preponderance of Romance roots—it has long been the fashion for modern Roumanians to claim direct descent from the legionaries of Trajan, who did, in fact, settle in large numbers in the rich province of Dacia. But the Roumanian language itself has a very considerable admixture of words of Slav origin, while the political structure of the earliest Roumanian States known to history, in Transylvania as well as in the new Roumania beyond the Carpathians, was essentially Slavonic—a feature we shall see reflected also in the forms and nomenclature of agrarian society.

It is clear, then, that much had happened between the final evacuation of Dacia by the Romans in A.D. 275 and the end of the thirteenth century. In the almost complete absence of definite historical evidence we are however obliged to

supply the explanation by such conjectures as will best fit in with the facts as known to us. A detailed elaboration of argument and counter-argument would be out of place here, more especially as history is too often treated in Eastern Europe as a mere storehouse of useful weapons for modern political discussions. In the following summary, therefore, we have endeavoured to arrive at a compromise which shall contain within itself an approach to the greatest common measure of reasonable probability.

When Trajan advanced against Decebal in A.D. 107 the centre of Dacian life lay at Sarmizegetusa, in the South of the modern Province of Transylvania. Some of the defeated Dacians appear to have fled northwards to the mountains, while others were probably absorbed in the motley band of settlers who flocked from all parts of the Roman world to the green pastures of this Eastern rampart of civilization. For practical purposes the Imperial sway seems to have been confined to South Transylvania, the Banat and the Province of Oltenia.

Upon the evacuation of Dacia by the Romans rather more than a century and a half later some of the inhabitants must have crossed the Danube into Moesia where, at a later date, they either amalgamated with the Bulgaro-Slavs or retired to live a nomadic life in the mountains of the South as their descendants, the Kutzo-Vlachs, continue to do to this day.

The remainder must have retreated to the highland pastures of the Carpathians for safety from the onrush of the Gepides, the Goths and the Hunnish peoples who followed one another westwards in successive waves of rapine and destruction. In their mountain retreats these erstwhile Roman colonists probably absorbed the last remnants of the Dacians, while their numbers were further added to from among the various Slav tribes which kept moving in from the North during these Dark Ages. Slavonic influence was still further increased through the prestige of the Bulgarian Empire, which was at one time all-powerful in this corner of Eastern

Europe; and by the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Eastern Church, to which the Roumanians have long belonged, though the date of their conversion to Christianity is still a matter of conjecture.

In any case the existence of large numbers of Roumanians in Transylvania in the thirteenth century is beyond all dispute; and it seems unlikely that this should have been due to a wholesale migration from the Balkan peninsula at an earlier date. In the year 1290 numbers of these Transylvanian Roumanians moved across the mountains to found the Principality of Wallachia under the lead of a semi-legendary personage called Radu Negru. A year or so earlier other colonists had passed through the defiles of the Golden Bistrița in the North and settled in Moldavia, though it was not until 1349 that these northern Roumanians, under their Voivod Bogdan, succeeded in throwing off Hungarian claims to suzerainty over the new Principality. By the middle of the fourteenth century, therefore, both Wallachia and Moldavia had risen to the status of independent statehood, though the arrival of the Turk soon after put a stop to the work of consolidation and began a new era in the historical evolution of the Roumanian people.

## § II

## THE STRUCTURE OF EARLY RURAL SOCIETY

### THE FREE

SOMETHING of the freedom of colonial conditions must have permeated the social structure of Roumania in the thirteenth century. Land there was in abundance and the village agglomeration, founded by a chieftain whose name it often bore, was the centre of activities of a people whose main occupation was stock-raising. The chieftain himself was termed either "Kneas[1]," a word of Slavonic origin meaning

[1] Kneas, pl. Knesi, is derived from *Knez* = king.

king, or else "Judece," a judge. He had been the leader in the migration of the group from Transylvania or from Moesia and, with a growth in the population, his sons would lead fresh expeditions in search of pastures new. The various kneseates soon united into small states under the authority of a "Voivod"—another Slav word denoting a military leader; and the union of voivodates which arose in the fight against Magyar claims to suzerainty over the new Roumanian colonies crystallized into the two historic Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia.

The power of the prince (Voivod) was supreme, and he, from the very foundation of the Principalities, appears to have been regarded as the lord of all the land, to whom tithe was due. While existing settlements were respected, all waste land, or by far the larger part of the total area, was in his gift. The "princely villages" established in course of time on this waste were frequently made over to members of the Boyar class[1], the rising military aristocracy of the country; while the enterprising founders of new settlements were often rewarded by princely grants confirming them in their title. The Knesi too, though no longer independent chieftains as of old, were recognized by the Voivod as hereditary lords of their villages and served a useful purpose as collectors of tithe for the prince. In origin, therefore, the title to land, apparently unknown in the semi-nomadic days of the sojourn in the mountains, appears to have been recognized by the head of the State as a means of recompensing faithful warriors and as a necessary corollary of the primitive administrative and fiscal system then prevailing[2].

[1] The word Boyar, written in Roumanian *Boier*, is itself of Bulgarian origin.

[2] It is a significant fact in this connection that the word *Boier* in Roumanian denotes both noble and State functionary. "La confusion des boyards avec les nobles," says Xenopol (*Histoire des Roumains de la Dacie Trajane*, I, p. 228), "vient du fait que la langue roumaine ne possède pas de terme spécial pour désigner les nobles, et emploie toujours le mot Boier pour désigner les deux notions...." This may well have been a source of difficulty in the eighteenth century, but there is surely no necessary confusion in the early period.

With the development of agriculture and the settlement of the country, the land surrounding the villages was divided up into a number of "Shares" called "Bătrâni," a term whose derivation from the Latin "Veteranus" indicates the origin of this social organization. The owner of a "bătrân" was called a "Rezeș[1]" in Moldavia, and a "Kneas" or a "Judece" in Wallachia. A stranger to the tribe could only acquire land by being received into the tribe whether by marriage or otherwise. At first the individual "bătrâni" do not appear to have been sharply marked off from one another, though the family in the narrow sense of the term remained the economic unit, unlike the tribal family which developed so much importance in the form of the "Zadruga" among the Southern Slavs, in the early Middle Ages. The whole community, however, appears to have been responsible for the misdemeanours of its individual members, and though the "bătrâni" were exploited severally, the tie of relationship remained an important element in village society.

In course of time the "bătrâni" were definitely separated off from one another, and the rights to woodland and water which their possession carried with them were likewise apportioned out. By the seventeenth century, if not earlier, the terms "knesi" and "rezeși" had come to denote simply the free peasantry—whose numbers had diminished considerably with the lapse of time. The process seems to have been something as follows. The growth of population, together with the subdivision of the kneseates first reduced the prestige and importance of the one-time village chieftain; from being lord of the village he became a mere "bătrân" holder. Unable to meet the ever-increasing burden of taxation which resulted, as we shall see later, from the oppression of the Turkish suzerain, many of the "knesi" were either deprived of their rights or found it expedient voluntarily to sell themselves with their lands to members of the boyar class.

[1] "Rezeș" is derived from the Latin "heres." Other names were "moșnean" (>Moșie=land) in Wallachia; and "Megiaș" in Moldavia.

The "kneas" had been not only chief but judge as well, as is shown by his alternative title of "judece." The fact that he was originally vested with executive and judicial functions is shown in a number of curious survivals. The bailiffs on the royal domains in Transylvania in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for instance, were called "knesi"; while almost down to our own times the hereditary parish magistrates in the Banat went by the name of "Chinez[1]," which is simply a corrupted form of the same word. A similar process may be observed in the case of the "Župani," or chieftains, who degenerated into more free peasants among the Alpine Slavs. It is interesting to note the further parallel of the village magistrates in Carniola and Styria—where the aristocratic župan class had been got rid of quite early—who were also called "župani," a title, moreover, which is still borne by the mayor of Lyublyana, the capital of the Slovene lands[2].

## THE UNFREE

The origin of the unfree peasantry, like that of the "knesi," must be sought, in part at least, at the time of the first settlement of the Principalities. The colonists from Transylvania, who appear to have belonged mainly to the lesser nobility and the free peasantry, found a not unimportant number of settlements already in existence in their new homeland. The fact that these peasantry, who depended upon the "knesi," were called by the racial appellation of "rumâni" has led Mr Radu Rosetti, the distinguished Roumanian writer on agrarian history, to suggest that these people were descendants of Balkan Roumanians who had been taken prisoner by the Slavs in the fifth and sixth centuries, and had later moved northwards under their new leaders. The use of

[1] *Vide Die Völker Oesterreich-Ungarns*, VI, "Die Rumänen," by I. Slavici, p. 57.

[2] *Vide Cambridge Medieval History*, II, p. 446. It would be easy, but quite unnecessary for our present purpose, to multiply references of this kind. The word "župan" is of Altaian origin.

the ethnic name to denote the lowest class of society has caused some difficulty to certain historians[1]. It may not, therefore, be without interest to note, in passing, that the similar class among the Southern Slavs were called "Srbi"; and that in their case too the nobility were of foreign origin.

Be this as it may, however, the arrival of the Transylvanians, by adding fresh dues and services over and above those already owing to the "knesi," certainly increased the burden on the unfree peasants.

In Moldavia the term used for the unfree is "Vecin," a word derived from the Latin "vicus," and thus denoting simply villagers. The "vecini" appear to have been in part, at least, of Slav origin, and their numbers were certainly added to from time to time from among the Slav immigrants who penetrated across the Nistru. This movement has in fact continued down to quite recent times. The Roumanian element in the early days of Moldavian history seems to have been left largely unmolested—a fact proved by the existence of a very considerable class of "rezeşi" (equivalent to the "knesi" and "moşneni" in Wallachia); and very probable in itself in view of the greater intensity of the struggle against the Hungarians in the northern Principality.

Grants of land by the Crown greatly diminished the number of royal peasants and naturally added to those who depended on the Boyars or on the Church. We have, moreover, already seen that confiscations and voluntary submissions transformed many "knesi" in course of time into "rumâni." The lot of these unfree peasants cannot at first, however, have been a very hard one. Even at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, when we first find documentary evidence about them, they merely paid tithe to their lord and performed quite moderate services. Indeed they even retained full possession of their lands, together with an hereditary claim to their holdings, and suffered only slight restrictions on their individual liberty of move-

[1] Cf. Xenopol, *op. cit.* I, p. 205.

ment[1]. They also had rights and claims against their lord which gradually acquired the force of custom and were finally enacted by statute in the seventeenth century.

For the present, however, we shall defer considering this relationship to a later section; though it seems appropriate to refer briefly in this place to the "community holding" which was found in some parts of the Moldavian lowlands. It is true that the first definite proofs of its existence are as recent as the eighteenth century[2], but the institution itself is undoubtedly of much older date. Under this system the right to hold land from the lord was vested not in the individual peasant but in the village community as a corporate body. The land was not usually worked in common, but the subdivision among the individual "vecini" was undertaken by the village magistrate, who often acted upon the advice of a number of the village elders. The individual holdings were redistributed periodically and every grown-up male who was able to do the necessary work was entitled to a share. These shares, however, were not all of equal size but varied according to the size of the family and the number of cattle owned by each individual. The most characteristic feature of this institution was that the claim of each individual arose not by virtue of family ties but solely as a result of his being a member of the community[3].

[1] This is the view of Xenopol (*op. cit.* I, p. 225). Grünberg doubts their freedom of movement and tentatively suggests a parallel in the πάροικοι of the Eastern Empire (Grünberg, "Die Unfreiheitsverhältnisse und ihre Beseitigung in der Bukowina," *Schmollers Jahrbuch*, 1900, IV, p. 245).

[2] This institution was prevalent in the Bucovina and was described by the Austrian officials soon after the occupation (*v.* Grünberg, *op. cit.* pp. 271–5). It proved very puzzling to bureaucrats who were accustomed to quite different systems of land tenure. It survived down to 1835 (*v. post*, p. 55).

[3] The "taeogdref," or unfree village in Medieval Wales, offers a remarkable parallel in this respect. Its inhabitants also held "not by rights of kinship but as members of the community" and the land was divided up between all the members of the "tref" (=community) who had attained the age of fourteen at the time of the periodical redistribution. Moreover, the "taeogdref" as a whole was responsible for what was due from it to the king; and this feature also characterized the Moldavian "community holding" (cf. Lloyd, *History of Wales*, I, pp. 295–7).

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## § III

## AN OUTLINE OF POLITICAL EVENTS (1300–1812)

Down to the end of the fourteenth century Roumanian history is concerned primarily with the consolidation of the new Principalities and the successful opposition to Hungarian claims to suzerainty. Already, however, the outposts of the Eastern Empire were beginning to fall before the irresistible force of Turkish arms, and the capture of Adrianople in 1362 did not fail to impress the Christian peoples of the Balkans. Roumanian troops shared with the Serbs in the glory and the horror of the disastrous defeat of Kossovo in the following year; while towards the end of the century Prince Mircea of Wallachia was himself taken prisoner while fighting against the Turks under Bajazet. His release was made conditional upon the payment of tribute to the Sultan, and the year 1391, when Wallachia was inscribed on the register of the Ottoman Porte as a tributary State, marks the beginning of the end of this first period of Roumanian independence.

After the death of Mircea both Principalities passed through a series of domestic crises precipitated by the activities of rival claimants to the respective thrones. The outcome was that Wallachia came more than ever under Turkish control, though during the latter half of the fifteenth century there came a reassertion of virtual independence under Stephen the Great, Voivod of Moldavia. The prestige of this ruler was naturally greatly enhanced by a sensational victory won over the Turks at Racova in 1475, but his attempt at forming a European alliance "to cut off the infidel's right hand" was less successful. Instead of uniting with Stephen against the Ottoman, the Poles, in an attempt to enforce the recognition of an alleged suzerainty, invaded Moldavia—though greatly to their own discomfiture be it added. Despite the sympathy of the Hungarian people, however, the projected grand alli-

ance failed to materialize, and on his death-bed in 1504 Stephen, with full knowledge of the difficulties of the alternative course, advised his son Bogdan to come to terms with the Sultan and purchase comparative repose rather than to squander his limited resources and ruin his country in continuing a conflict the issue of which he saw could not much longer be in doubt.

After the Treaty made in 1513 between Bogdan and the Turk, both Principalities had sunk to the level of tributary States of the Porte. In Wallachia the tribute had at first been fixed at 3000 ducats, though this sum had risen to 40,000 ducats by the middle of the sixteenth century. The Treaty of 1513 also stipulated for an annual payment of 3000 ducats by Moldavia, but here too the existence of rival claimants to the throne—one of the inevitable consequences of an elective monarchy, even when the succession is hereditary in the same family—provided ample scope for Turkish intrigue, and the tribute rose as each successive election was recognized by the Porte. But a demand for an increase from 60,000 to 120,000 ducats, which was in fact the sum offered by a rival claimant, proved too much for John the Terrible of Moldavia—one of the few rulers in the annals of Roumanian history who cared more for the peasantry than for the boyars. It is this fact, perhaps, which explains the vigour with which he carried on his struggle against the Turk, and the tragedy of his ultimate defeat, caused by the defection of his cavalry, in 1575. Ravaged by Turks and Tatars alike, Moldavia now realized more than ever before that the payment of an ever-increasing tribute did not necessarily mean freedom from hostile occupation or stability in internal administration.

Though the annals of this period provide us for the most part with long and dismal accounts of corruption and oppression in Wallachia coupled with turmoil and destruction in Moldavia, the sixteenth century nevertheless closes with one of the most brilliant episodes in Roumanian history.

To purchase his election in 1593 as Voivod of Wallachia, Michael the Brave had been obliged to borrow 400,000 ducats in Constantinople. The miserable state of his country together with his own financial embarrassments led him, however, to satisfy his creditors "not with gold but with fire and the sword," to quote Xenopol's picturesque phrase[1]. The revolt proclaimed by him against the Turks proved a brilliant success, and Michael further profited by the general uncertainty of the political situation and the discontent which prevailed in the adjoining countries to unite under his sway the three Roumanian lands of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. But this first experiment in national unity was short-lived, for in 1601 Michael fell a victim to the assassin's dagger. His fame, however, is still celebrated by the Roumanian peasant in a ballad as impressive in its monotony of rhythm as it is genuine in its pride of race. This is perhaps all the more surprising in that Michael not only did nothing for the peasant but actually supported the pretensions of the dominant Magyar aristocracy in Transylvania. His death nevertheless marks an epoch in Roumanian history, for the chronicle of his reign is the swan-song of national independence. From this time onward the Turk is the undoubted master of the situation, and for over two hundred years all the spirit seems crushed out of the Roumanian people.

The wars of the sixteenth century had weighed especially hard on the free peasantry, whose privilege it was to bear the brunt of the fighting. Indeed it is in some ways surprising that the "knesi" and the "rezeşi" should have survived at all, though they did in fact continue right down to modern times worthily to represent their race under the protection of the Carpathian massive in Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldavia alike.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, mercenary armies made their appearance in the Principalities, with a resultant decline in the political influence of the boyars.

[1] Xenopol, *op. cit.* I, p. 345.

Slowly the use of money had become more general in the country and taxes began to be paid in cash and not in kind, as had previously been the case. Moldavia carried on a considerable export business in cattle and horses as early as the previous century, the horses, in particular, being described by a French Minister to the Court of Warsaw as "excellents et de grande haleine[1]." But Soliman the Magnificent forbade exports to Poland and to Hungary, and asserted the suzerain's right of pre-emption in the case of all agricultural produce. The Roumanian lands thus became one of the principal sources of supply for Constantinople no less than for the Turkish garrisons at Tighina, Cetatea Alba and Belgrade. The systematic exploitation of this trade fell into the hands of Greeks, Armenians and Jews, who also acted as general intermediaries in the collection and forwarding of tribute. Thus while the Princes recouped themselves by the imposition of heavy money-taxes for the great outlay in bribes and fees which preceded their election by the Turkish suzerain, the suzerain himself imposed, in addition, an exorbitant tribute on the luckless country. In fact as the powers of the Sultan declined with the emancipation of many of his former territories by the Treaties of Karlowitz in 1698 and of Passarowitz twenty years later, so the lot of the Christian peoples still remaining under the Turkish yoke became progressively less enviable. In the eighteenth century, for instance, Wallachia had to provide some 135,000 hectolitres of wheat each year, while the Principalities between them sent over half a million sheep annually to the harbours of the Danube[2].

Even the corrupt native princes could not keep pace with the ever-increasing demands of their suzerain, and by about the beginning of the eighteenth century their place was taken by Phanariote Greeks in whose business capacity, not to say rapacity, the Sultan could better trust. The new hospodars,

[1] Blaise de Vigenère, quoted in Xenopol, *op. cit.* II, p. 242.

[2] D. B. Jonescu, "Die Agrarverfassung Rumäniens," p. 11 (*Schmollers Forschungen*, No. 136, 1909).

as they were called, were very skilled in their profession and the boyars, who also depended as a class on the good graces of their foreign masters, proved themselves very apt pupils. In Wallachia especially these one-time warriors indulged in a life of indolence and luxury at the Court of Bucarest, gaining in what they were pleased to regard as "culture" what they had already lost in decent feeling and self-respect. The peasant meanwhile was called upon to pay the piper[1].

We have already seen how the weight of taxation proved fatal to many members of the former class of independent "knesi." In a similar manner the exorbitant demands of the boyars and the needs of the hospodars combined with the burden of tribute to the suzerain to depress the "rumâni" and the "vecini" down to the level of veritable serfs. The distinction between the two principal classes of Roumanian society became all the more complete in that it was consummated, as we shall see later, in the legal no less than in the economic sphere.

The Turkish suzerainty had the most disastrous consequences on every aspect of the life of the Roumanian nation. The social cleavage between lord and serf became so great that it was no satisfaction to the peasant to know that the boyars were at any rate of the same nationality as he himself. His lot was indeed quite as hard, if not harder, than that of the Roumanian peasant in Transylvania under the Magyar magnates. Again, although the Turk was disdainfully tolerant in matters of religion and did not usually harass his Christian subjects so long as tribute was forthcoming, the Turkish connection brought the religious life of the country entirely under the control of the Greek Patri-

[1] General v. Bauer, for a time Austrian resident in Bucarest, thus characterizes the boyars: "Ils sont lâches et rampans devant leurs supérieurs, insupportablement fiers avec leurs inférieurs; l'argent leur fait tout faire; ils sont intrigans, cabaleurs, sang-sues impitoyables du peuple, oppresseurs du foible, séveres envers leurs sujets et tyrans dans leurs maisons." *V.* "Mémoires sur la Valachie," par M. de B... in Carra, *Histoire de Moldavie*, Neuchâtel, 1781, p. 234.

archate, and thus intensified the evils of foreign domination. The fact that the Phanariotes and the priests were Christians did not usually make them solicitous as to the welfare of their Roumanian co-religionists. On the contrary the corruption and the tyranny of Constantinople were none the less fatal in their effects on national life for coming in Greek guise[1]. The consequences of this regime, moreover, have left a deep and lasting impress on Roumanian State life, and the moral disintegration of the nation which resulted from the Ottoman domination has proved more permanent in its effects than the economic exploitation which first accompanied it.

The foreign oppressor, however, had not even the advantage of being strong, and the Principalities soon became pawns in the great international game known to historians by the somewhat misleading name of the "Eastern Question."

In 1768 the question was opened in its modern phase by the first Russo-Turkish War, a fight between the one-eyed and the blind as Frederick the Great not inaptly called it. The Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, which terminated the struggle six years later, important as it was for Russian interests in the Near East, nevertheless failed to realize the grandiose ambitions of the great Catharine. Her project of a kingdom of Dacia, comprising Moldavia and Wallachia, to be ruled by an orthodox Prince did not materialize, for lack of international support. Joseph II of Austria, however, had pursued a policy of ambitious neutrality during the war, and the north-west corner of Moldavia—now known as the Bucovina—which he had occupied *manu militari* in 1774 was ceded to him by the Turks in the following year as a definite,

[1] Carra, a Frenchman who spent some time in the Principalities in the second half of the eighteenth century, wrote of the native Moldavians and Wallachians as follows: "Leur caractère a été en quelque façon détourné de son penchant à la bonté; et si la simplicité de leurs mœurs a été corrompue, on ne peut l'attribuer qu'aux Grecs qui, tels que des harpies infectes qui gâtent tout ce qu'elles touchent pour s'en emparer seules, viennent du fond de la Thrace et des isles de l'Archipel dépouiller les deux provinces et n'y laisser en sortant que des traces de leurs vices et de leur cupidité." Carra, *op. cit.* p. 190.

though perhaps somewhat unwilling, sign of their appreciation of his good offices. The first breach in the territorial integrity of the Principalities was thus made at a time when "partition" was the order of the day.

Not many years were to elapse, however, before a further and even more important territorial sacrifice was to be made by the Turkish suzerain at the expense of the Danubian Principalities. While Western Europe was in the throes of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the Romanoffs were busily consolidating and adding to their already vast heritage. In 1806 the Sultan, whose power over the Principalities had for some time been on the wane, succumbed to the advice of the French envoy at Constantinople and deposed the hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia for being too amenable to Russian influence. This was treated by the Tsar as a declaration of war, and Russian troops were soon in Bucarest. The Treaty signed in that city on May 28, 1812, ceded to Russia that part of the old voivodate of Moldavia which lies between the Nistru and the Prut. The real modern significance of this event, however, is not that the Turkish suzerain lost part of a province in 1812. It is rather that the separation of Bessarabia[1], for that was the new name given to the territory in question, from the rest of Moldavia was to add yet another difficulty to the almost insuperable problem of Roumanian reunion. The specious argument that Bessarabia did not form part of Roumania in 1812 because Roumania itself did not then exist can only convince a believer in the doctrine that the State is nothing more than a mere patrimonium of its ruler. The Sultan moreover had proved himself better able to bleed his unfortunate patrimony than to defend it against external attack.

From the national point of view, the Bucovina and Bessarabia passed from Greco-Turkish to Austrian and Russian

[1] "Basarabia" was the name given to the private estates of the Basarab dynasty. Some of these lay in the south of the new Russian province, which thus acquired its modern name.

rule respectively, and the latter were to prove much more difficult to cast off than the former. Moreover, these political changes played so important a rôle in the agrarian history of the Roumanian people that, while we may treat the problem in the Principalities as a whole down to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, for the more modern period the Old Kingdom, the Bucovina and Bessarabia each require separate treatment.

## § IV

## THE GROWTH OF SERFDOM

The powerlessness of the princes, the increasing burden of taxation which was the consequence of the ruinous system of tribute and of the introduction of mercenary armies, and the growth of a money economy combined with the needs of the boyars—who were not always over-scrupulous in their choice of procedure—to make serfdom inevitable. But this, in turn, was really part of a wider movement, for the coming of the Phanariotes, superposed, as it were, upon the Roumanian people, necessitated a general depression of almost all the other classes of Roumanian society. While the former free peasantry tended, as we have seen, to be swallowed up in the mass of the unfree, the status of these latter in turn approximated more and more to serfdom. Parallel with these changes, however, the native aristocracy lost much of their independence, and certain of the boyars, thanks in part no doubt to the equal subdivision of real property which prevailed, themselves sank to the level of the free peasantry. By the beginning of the eighteenth century we can trace the origin of this new class, called "mazilii[1]," whose position resembled in many ways that of the "knesi" four centuries

[1] The term originally denoted boyar functionaries deprived of their offices and ordered to retire to their estates.

earlier. Nevertheless the lesser landed nobility, cultivating its own estates, never attained to any very great importance in Roumanian life. This feature forms perhaps the most important distinction between the Agrarian History of the Principalities and that of the adjoining kingdom of Hungary. For the most part the boyars managed to make good at the expense of the peasantry, for they were indispensable to the hospodars, whose tenure of office was never very extended, as intermediaries for the exploitation of the *misera plebs contribuens*. This process involved a gradual change in the legal status of the "rumâni" and the "vecini" which we shall now attempt briefly to describe.

The question of the origin of the unfree peasantry has already been considered and it has been pointed out that, even as late as the beginning of the sixteenth century, they merely paid tithe to their lord and performed quite moderate services[1]. Unfortunately for them, however, these services were not fixed by statute and increased inordinately in course of time. Subject, in this manner, to the arbitrary demands of their lord, the peasants attempted in actual practice to assert a claim to freedom of movement, which, according to some writers, was theirs as of right[2]. But this claim threatened the very basis of the lord's prosperity, and, during the sixteenth century, his right to reclaim his fugitive peasants was established by almost universal custom and finally acquired the force of law in Wallachia by a "chrysobul" of Michael the Brave (*circa* 1593), while similar legislation was passed by Vasile Lupo in Moldavia some fifty years later (1644). In this manner the first, and perhaps the most important, step was taken in the establishment of serfdom[3] in the Principalities.

During the seventeenth century a very important movement set in which led to still further claims being asserted against the unfree peasantry. The tithe no longer proving

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 8. [2] *Vide ante*, p. 9, n. 1.
[3] The Roumanian term for this institution is "Şerbie."

sufficient to meet the needs of the boyars and the exactions of the Turks, the nobles had perforce to engage in agricultural production on their own account. This they had always done, but only to a small extent, with the result that their claims in respect of services had never been very great. With this change in organization, which was especially important in Moldavia, the need for labour, and hence for services, increased enormously. The resultant claims cannot be justified if we have regard to the real nature of the relationship between the lord and the peasantry. Nevertheless the boyars, supported by the hospodars, succeeded in establishing a new legal regulation of the question based on the fiction that they enjoyed full proprietary rights over all the land cultivated by the peasants. By the end of the century we find several cases of orders issued by the prince to individual villages enjoining the performance of varying quotas of labour services for the lord, while all members of the peasant family were called upon to work, and not merely one male from each family as appears previously to have been the rule[1].

Those peasants who settled of their own free will in a lord's village[2] had for long retained their personal freedom, and were much in the position of free tenants. But their isolation marked them out as an easy prey, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century, they became in most cases indistinguishable from the "rumâni" and the "vecini." Indeed it had soon become an established principle that after twelve years' residence in a village a man automatically became a "vecin." By the eighteenth century the absorption of these "colonists," as they have been called, in the ranks of the serfs was practically complete.

The legal position of the "rumâni" and the "vecini" early in the eighteenth century was however in many ways not

[1] So says Jonescu, *op. cit.* p. 14.

[2] Called "plugari" (=ploughmen) in Moldavia, and "laturaşi" (=dwellers on the edge of the village) in Wallachia. The rental paid was either in kind (called "dijma">decima) or in services (the so-called "claca").

unfavourable. Although they were settled in the village and could be sold by their lord, they could not be separated from their holdings, which were handed down from father to son. The boyar had neither civil nor criminal jurisdiction over them, and the killing of a "vecin" by his lord was treated as murder and automatically led to the emancipation of his wife and children. In a word "there has never existed in Roumania that confusion of sovereignty and of property which is one of the principal characteristics of feudalism." In practice, however, it was hard indeed for the serf to obtain redress from his lord, and the arbitrary demands for an augmentation of the services due drove the peasantry to desperation. Indeed the first half of the eighteenth century is characterized above all by an exodus of the down-trodden "rumâni" and "vecini" from the Principalities into the adjoining lands. Attempts at reforming the corrupt and inefficient administration of the taxes, which were made by Constantine Mavrocordato, hospodar of Wallachia, still further intensified this emigration of the rural masses. A census taken by him in 1741 established the presence of 147,000 peasant families in his Principality. In 1745—a year after his reform of taxation—this number was reduced to half, while only a quarter remained towards the end of his reign[1].

Depopulation threatened most serious consequences as it became increasingly difficult to find the wherewithal to meet the annual tribute due to the Turkish suzerain. Accordingly Mavrocordato compelled the boyars, in 1746, to grant very favourable terms to such of the peasants as should return to their holdings. They were to be accorded freedom of movement and personal liberty; while, apart from the tithe, the lord's claims upon them were to be limited to six days' work a year. Moreover any serf could purchase emancipation upon payment of ten piastres. As a result of the opposition aroused by this legislation the Porte feared that unpleasant

[1] *V.* General v. Bauer in Carra, *Histoire de Moldavie, etc.*, p. 272.

consequences might ensue to the suzerain from the weakening of the prestige and privileges of the aristocracy, and transferred Mavrocordato to Moldavia.

His reforming zeal led him to institute legislation here also, though earlier experience showed the need for caution and moderation even in good works. The presence of Turkish garrisons in this frontier province[1], no less than its proximity to the sea, had made Moldavia an even easier prey than Wallachia to the economic exploitation of the suzerain. This, combined with the fact that the population was here still less dense than in Wallachia, had necessitated the establishment of vast latifundia and a large extensive cultivation by the boyars themselves. Little regard was paid to the customary rights of the unfree peasantry and, at the time of the arrival of Mavrocordato as hospodar, the "vecini" were in fact treated on the same footing as the "robi"—a class of veritable slaves recruited from among the gipsies. Faced with the problem of depopulation, which was by no means confined to the sister Principality, a solemn declaration of the rights of the "vecini" was forced through a divan (or Parliament) of unwilling boyars by Constantine in 1749[2]. On no account were the "vecini" to be treated as though they were "robi"; they might not be separated from their homestead and family; while their obligations to their lord were to be limited to the tithe and to twenty-four days' service annually. This law, however, did not affect the old regulations as to settlement, though the "vecini" might change their village if they could

[1] There were garrisons at Kilia, Cetatea Alba, Tighina, Ismail, Kameniek and Hotin, all under the command of Turkish pashas. Hotin, in the north-eastern corner of Bessarabia, is situated on the Nistru and boasts of a castle built by Stephen the Great (*circa* 1480), which is even to-day in an excellent state of preservation. Within the ramparts a graceful minaret still proclaims that there is but one God, and that Mahomet is his prophet, while close at hand are the charred remains of what were once Russian barracks. The squalor and the Oriental colouring of a large ghetto complete a picture which makes of this little frontier town a perfect miniature of Moldavian history.

[2] This law was called "Act pentru desrobire țeranilor in Moldavia," and was passed on April 6, 1749.

show proper cause, but even then only with the consent of the lord.

Modest as were the provisions of this Act in comparison with the reform instituted by Mavrocordato in Wallachia three years earlier, they none the less provoked such opposition on the part of the boyars that the hospodar was this time deprived of his office by the Porte. His reform of taxation also failed its purpose. As compensation for the losses entailed by the reassertion of the legal status of the "vecini," certain of these latter (the so-called "scutelnici") were exempted from paying the State tax in order that it might be paid to the boyars instead. Others again (the so-called "poslujnici") were likewise exempted in order that they might perform personal services[1] to their lord. In reality, however, the "reform" of 1749 remained a dead letter, though the boyars succeeded in maintaining their new "compensatory" privileges, which included freedom from taxation. The actual burden of taxation thus bore more heavily than ever before upon the mass of the "vecini," who had also, in effect, been deprived of all legal title to their lands.

Constantine Mavrocordato was practically the only Phanariote hospodar who made any attempt to improve the lot of the peasantry. The system of government and the balance of forces in the Principalities were however of such a character that enlightened despotism was foredoomed to failure. Such had also been the experience of the Austrians who, for the twenty-one years which intervened between the Treaties of Passarowitz and of Belgrade (1718–1739), had occupied and administered the province of Oltenia. While the reports made by them[2] on the condition of the country and its government are of the greatest interest to the student of

[1] Services similar to the "Hand- & Gesindedienste" in Eastern Germany.

[2] These are summarized by Xenopol, *op. cit.* II, pp. 202–7. Of particular interest is the census taken in 1734. There were then some

Roumanian history, it must suffice here to state that their attempts to regularize the administration on more efficient lines failed completely through a lack of appreciation of the real difficulties involved. Moreover the only possible final solution was of so drastic and revolutionary a nature that neither the Germans in Oltenia nor Mavrocordato in the rest of the Principalities would have dared to apply it, even had they so desired. At the same time no patchwork could possibly prove adequate while Turkish suzerainty remained.

## § V

## THE CLIMAX OF OPPRESSION

THE second half of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century, a period when the feudal structure of rural society was rapidly breaking down in Western Europe, witnessed the climax of oppression in Roumania. This further development of serfdom in the Principalities can best be considered in three main aspects. We shall in fact be concerned almost exclusively with (*a*) the quota of land legally assignable by the lord to the peasants; (*b*) the legal determination of the year-work; and (*c*) the growth of *banalités*, which is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the period.

The claims of the lord to tithe and services had at all times been dependent upon the granting of sufficient land to his peasantry to ensure them the means of subsistence. While the population of the country was very sparse, and,

40,000 families in the Province of whom some 4000 were exempt from taxes. The following categories were registered:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Large Boyars | 52 families. | Rich Free Tenants | 75 families. |
| Medium ,, | 169 ,, | Ordinary ,, ,, | 5690 ,, |
| Small ,, | 5900 ,, | Serfs ... ... | 27000 ,, |

The preponderance of the "rumâni" is most remarkable even in this Province which has always been noted for its free peasantry.

above all so long as the lord cultivated but little land himself, this counterclaim of the peasant had always been adequately met. The events which we have chronicled in the preceding section, however, brought about a complete change in this connection. In his desire to cultivate on a large scale himself, the boyar continually encroached upon the quota of land which had previously been assigned by him to his peasants. This he did with the greater readiness in that he had come to regard himself, as we have also seen, as the owner of the land, as possessing complete proprietary rights, and not merely as vested with certain customary claims against the peasantry. Dispossession proceeded apace under the cloak of this new legal theory and a series of attempts had to be made by the hospodar to place a limit upon the rapacity of the aristocracy. In Wallachia, however, where this process was much less marked than in Moldavia, there was no statutory regulation of the extent of the lands to be allotted to the peasantry prior to the Russian occupation which began in 1829.

In the northern Principality, after a somewhat futile attempt in 1770, the question was settled by the hospodar Alexander Moruzi in 1805. According to an Act of that year, the maximum with which the lord was obliged to supply his peasants was two-thirds of his estate—excluding forests. So far as this was sufficient for the purpose, each peasant was entitled to claim a quota of land which varied according to the number of oxen he possessed[1]. This legal quota was

[1] The serfs were divided into four classes:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fruntaşi | with 8 oxen, | receiving | 12 falcie | (=42 acres). |
| Mijlocaşi | ,, 6 ,, | ,, | 9 ,, | (=31½ ,, ). |
| Codaşi | ,, 4 ,, | ,, | 6 ,, | (=21 ,, ). |
| A patrulea Stare | ,, 2 ,, | ,, | 3 ,, | (=10½ ,, ). |

"Fruntaşi" are those in "front," "mijlocaşi" those in the "middle," and "codaşi" those at the "tail" end. "A patrulea Stare" represents the "fourth class."

Each share of land was to be composed of arable, meadow and pasture in equal portions. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of serfs without oxen.

greater in the less thickly populated region between the Siret and the Prut than in the hill district, and it was expressly laid down that, in the event of the legal maximum of two-thirds of the estate not proving sufficient, the peasants must content themselves with a proportionately smaller quota.

While this Act, or "Uricariul" as it is called, accorded the lord greater privileges than he could have claimed by ancient custom, it would nevertheless have provided a certain safeguard for the "vecini"—had it been strictly carried out! Whether observed in practice or no, it continued as the legal basis of the question down to the "Règlement Organique" of 1831 which will be described in the next section.

The second important manner in which the power of the lord over the serf was increased was by raising the number of days' service owed annually. We have seen how Mavrocordato attempted to limit labour services in Wallachia to six days' work a year. This law remained a dead letter in actual practice, and, in 1775, Alexander Ypsilanti enacted that the year-work should be fixed at twelve days. This same Act, however, only purported to fix a maximum and left it open to the boyars to make separate contractual agreements with the peasants on more favourable terms to the latter. In 1818 the hospodar John Caragea enacted that twelve days was the minimum, and that any contract for a lesser period was null and void. In this manner it was hoped to prevent the boyars from competing against one another for "rumâni" by offering exceptionally favourable terms. As the demand for labour was greater than the supply it seemed necessary to limit the free working of economic forces by statutory regulations in favour of the boyar class. It is worth noting, moreover, that the twelve days really amounted to a much longer period, for the term "day's work" is an elastic phrase which the boyars soon defined in such a manner that it needed about three days to perform by any ordinary peasant.

In Moldavia the same tendency was at work, though the lot of the peasantry was much harder than in the sister

Principality. Even Mavrocordato had perforce to fix the year-work at twenty-four days in his Reform of 1749; and this had risen to thirty days by 1766, and to forty-three days in the Uricariul of Prince Moruzi.

At first sight, indeed, this does not appear very considerable if we compare the position in the Principalities with that in the adjoining Polish territories, for example. It is necessary to repeat, however, that the legal "day" was by no means the same as a real day's work; while the law itself consistently lagged behind the actual practice of the boyars. It is true that the peasant was entitled to provide substitutes to perform his quota of work. As, however, the lord was left the option of demanding money payments in place of the tithe in kind, and as, further, the Turkish suzerain maintained the right of pre-emption at a price-level which was wholly inadequate in view of the fall in the value of money and the first beginnings of an active demand for agricultural produce in the West, it is clear that the peasant could not have much ready money available with which to pay for a substitute.

Side by side with the reduction in the amount of land assignable to them and with a constant increase in the services due by them, the peasantry were harassed with a number of petty restrictions which may conveniently be compared to the *banalités* and similar burdens in pre-revolutionary France. Right down to the eighteenth century, for instance, the forests had been regarded as communal property. By the end of the century, on the other hand, the serfs were only allowed to fetch wood for their own domestic use, and, in Moldavia, they were actually restricted to fallen timber. They could only let their swine feed in the forests by special arrangement with their lord, and the clearings which had previously been regarded as their own property and free from tithe and services were declared, at the end of the century, to belong to the lord. In 1775 they were refused the right to lay down vineyards without special consent, while the sale of wine and "ţuica" (the national drink made

from a distillation of plums) became a seignorial monopoly. Their corn had to be taken to the lord's mill and a tithe of the flour paid over for the grinding; while a tithe or more of the catch had likewise to be surrendered when the peasant went fishing. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the galling interferences to which these wretched "rumâni" and "vecini" were subjected. The capital fact for our present purpose is that all these burdens were introduced in the second half of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries, when the boyars were beginning to profit by contact with Western civilization, and that prior to that time they had been practically non-existent. If we remember further that during these years the Principalities were the scene of constant invasions and wars, we can readily understand the misery of the peasantry and their fierce resentment against their lords. The position is perhaps best summed up in the memorial of Prince Michael Sturza, who reigned as hospodar of Moldavia from 1834 to 1849:

> Oui, elle est misérable la condition du paysan moldave (et valaque); envisagé comme un être qui ne doit pas exister que pour les caprices d'autrui; presque réduit à l'état abject de brute; abandonné à la rapacité de tous les employés, depuis le clergé, depuis le plus grand fonctionnaire jusqu'au plus petit collecteur; pressuré également par le fermier et par le propriétaire, après tout cela on accuse ce pauvre paysan d'être indolent et paresseux.

And yet the climax of oppression had already been passed when these words were written!

## § VI

## THE RUSSO-TURKISH PROTECTORATE AND THE RÈGLEMENT ORGANIQUE OF 1831

EVER since the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji Russian influence in the Principalities had been on the increase. In 1802 the Tsar forced the Porte to nominate the hospodars for seven years instead of three, thereby guaranteeing a certain continuity of policy which was of course to be exploited in the interests of Russia. The Phanariote Greeks, for their part, had long been meditating the renaissance of an Hellenic State and, in 1821, Ypsilanti raised the standard of revolt in the Principalities. This movement did not receive popular support, for the Roumanian boyars, for their part, realized that the active intervention of the Tsar would not be forthcoming and wisely held aloof; while the peasantry of Oltenia, regarding the boyar class, whether Greek or Roumanian, as the enemy, rose under Tudor Vladimirescu, who appealed to the Porte and the Powers alike for support against the tyranny of the aristocracy. This popular rising, however, rapidly acquired a national character and certainly exercised a considerable influence in determining the future policy of the Porte. Indeed after defeating the remnants of the Phanariotes in the skirmish of Dragoşani, the suzerain in 1822 nominated two native princes as hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia. The outcome of this rather confused year of revolution was, therefore, that the political supremacy of the Phanariotes came definitely to an end, though the lack of co-ordination in the peasant revolt failed to bring about any amelioration of the lot of the serfs.

The next important landmark in the history of the Principalities is the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) which concluded the Russo-Turkish War. By its terms Turkey undertook to pay an indemnity of five million pounds and gave Russia the right to occupy the Principalities until this sum had been

paid in full. As the victors stipulated further that the hospodars were henceforth to be appointed for life and that no Turkish garrison should be maintained on the left bank of the Danube, it is clear that the Treaty gave Russia a virtual protectorate over the Principalities—a relationship which she succeeded in maintaining down to the Crimean War.

Two years later General Kisseleff, the new military governor of the Principalities, promulgated a document known as the Règlement Organique (1831), which laid down the form in which the country was to be administered under the new regime, and this comprehensive statute amongst other things regulated and codified the legal position of the serfs and their obligations to their lords. According to its terms the peasants found their quota of land considerably diminished as compared with that to which they were nominally entitled under the older legislation. The approximate distribution to the various categories is given in the following table:

In Acres

| | Fruntaşi (with 4 oxen) | Mijlocaşi (with 2 oxen) | Codaşi (with no cattle) |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Moldavia:* | | | |
| House and garden | ½ | ½ | ½ |
| Arable | 5¼ | 5¼ | 5¼ |
| Meadow and pasture | 12¼ | 8 | 2½ |
| *Wallachia:* | | | |
| House and garden | ¼ | ¼ | ¼ |
| Arable | 3¾ | 3¾ | 3¾ |
| Meadow and pasture | 5½ | 2¾ | 0 |

It will be seen that the arable assignable was the same for all three categories, while most significant is the fact that this statute envisaged the case of serfs without any cattle at all. The amount of land available was naturally greater in Moldavia, but even there no "vecin" could claim more than

18 acres, nor less than $8\frac{1}{4}$ acres. In Wallachia there are slight adjustments to be made in the hill district, which was much more thickly peopled than the plains, and the case of a serf with five oxen was also allowed for. The maximum that the head of a "rumân" family could claim was thus just under 11 acres and the minimum slightly over $5\frac{1}{4}$ acres. It must, however, be borne in mind that the old principle established in the Uricariul of Prince Moruzi, that in no case was the lord bound to hand over more than two-thirds of his estate to his peasants for cultivation, was still maintained. Moreover, if a serf were not content with a proportionately smaller quota when sufficient land was not available in the locality the lord was empowered to expel him, a right he further enjoyed in the case of any serf who should not prove tractable. The year-work too was defined in a sense unfavourable to the "vecini." The old total of twelve days annually was maintained in both Principalities, and legally defined in such a manner as to necessitate about thirty-six days' work. In addition, wood-carrying and repairs on the estate together called for a further eleven days' work; while, in place of the former "scutelnici," a class which was now abolished, every ten families were called upon to provide a man to perform personal services for the lord. (In Wallachia this duty was performed by one man for every twenty-five families.) This meant an addition of the equivalent of at least fifteen days' service to the head of each family; which, with an allowance for the tithe, which was still payable, made a grand total of the equivalent of some sixty-eight days annually—or nearly 45 per cent. of the Roumanian agricultural year[1].

The peasant did not acquire complete freedom of movement, though the settlement was slightly less binding than had previously been the case. Six months' notice was now necessary—save when the serf was dissatisfied with his quota of land—and all taxes for the ensuing year had first to be

[1] This is Grünberg's estimate (*v.* Art. "Bauernbefreiung; Rumänien," in *Wörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, II).

paid before he could leave his holding. Many of the burdensome restrictions were maintained, and at first sight the peasants seemed to have lost considerably by the provisions of the Règlement Organique. And yet in reality the climax of oppression had already been passed. Kisseleff it is true would have gone much further in a liberal direction and complained bitterly of the callous selfishness of the boyars. An enlightened man, he had carried on a hard and successful fight, quite regardless of danger to himself, against the plague and cholera epidemics which swept over the country during the first two years of the occupation. Moreover, he abolished the corrupt voluntary police force which remained as a relic of the Turkish rule and placed the administration on a sounder footing than ever before. Although the boyars had succeeded in establishing themselves finally as proprietors, and although they had in some respects managed to enforce upon the new *de facto* suzerain regulations extending and confirming their ill-gotten privileges, it is none the less true that arbitrary exactions practically ceased with the Règlement Organique and the new regime. The boyars had barred the road to further progress and the need for their co-operation had compelled the Russians to acquiesce; but the legal minimum which was now assured to the peasantry did not remain a dead letter as had so often been the case previously. When legal regulation corresponds to actual practice, the establishment of oppression and tyranny in statutory form is often the first and necessary step to its abolition.

The Russians have been much blamed for their policy, but in this as in almost every other crisis in Roumanian history, the boyars proved themselves to be the real obstacle to reform. Moreover, the abrogation of the Turkish right of pre-emption over the agricultural produce of the country which was effected by the Treaty of Adrianople, together with the establishment of a stable government and the introduction of freedom of trade, produced results in the economic sphere which are indeed astounding. Prior to this period

the mass of the population had been concentrated in the mountains and in the foothills of the Carpathians. Now, however, the plains of the Danube and much of the rich land between the Siret and the Prut came under the plough for the first time. Lord Baltimore had stated in 1764 that in crossing the whole territory of Moldavia, from Galatz to Hotin, he had scarcely come across any cultivated land[1]. After the inauguration of the new regime, however, the development of the arable land in the northern Principality proceeded apace, as the following table shows[2]:

Total Arable

| | | Acres |
|---|---|---|
| 1833 | ... | 1,099,000 |
| 1844 | ... | 1,248,450 |
| 1846 | ... | 1,624,000 |
| 1850 | ... | 1,740,900 |
| 1859 | ... | 1,989,000 |

It appears as though the greater part of this increase came from the estates worked by the boyars, and it is worth noting that in the North absentee landlords were rare. The introduction of improved implements and a money economy led however to the "vecin" becoming more and more of a farm labourer; and it paid him better to try and come to terms with his lord rather than to insist upon the letter of the law.

In Wallachia, on the other hand, the boyars were less energetic and the new lands in the plains were settled in the main by peasants who came from the hills as tenants on a produce-sharing basis. This system of partial metayage was not unfavourable to the peasantry and led to a great increase in the cultivated area of the Principality. As a result the Wallachian "rumâni" were in many cases better off than they had been for many long years before. Of course, conditions, while better than in Moldavia, were in many respects still most unsatisfactory. At the same time, peace and a

[1] *q.* Xenopol, *op. cit.* II, p. 318.

[2] Estimates of Mr Radu Rosetti. The figures are given in "falcie"; 1 falce being equal to rather more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

relatively stable administration, by making possible the opening-up of new lands for settlement, did much to obviate the baneful consequences that might otherwise have resulted from the statute of 1831. This period, therefore, while it did not bring any attempt at a solution of the agrarian question in the modern sense of the term, nevertheless put off the day of reckoning; though gradually it became clear that this could not be delayed indefinitely. Moreover the serfs themselves were slowly beginning to regain something of their self-respect and to become more conscious of the injustices under which they still suffered.

During these years, too, a change was made in the legal position of the "robi" or gipsy slaves[1]. In 1844 those on estates belonging to the Crown and to the religious foundations acquired their personal freedom in Wallachia, while the same result was achieved in Moldavia in the following year. The boyars, however, showed no inclination to treat their gipsy dependents in the same manner, and it was not until 1855 (1856 in Moldavia) that the "robi" status was definitely abolished throughout the country.

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 22, and *post*, p. 51.

# *Chapter Two*

# The Agrarian History of Roumania

## II

### THE OLD KINGDOM *from* THE PEACE OF PARIS *to* THE GREAT WAR

I. Prince Alexander Cuza and Emancipation

II. Criticism of the Reform of 1864

III. Later Agrarian Legislation

## § I

# PRINCE ALEXANDER CUZA AND EMANCIPATION

THE period of the Russo-Turkish suzerainty was remarkable above all in that it witnessed the renaissance of Roumanian national feeling. The growth of schools and colleges which was possible largely as a result of the migration into the Principalities of educated Roumanians from Transylvania, combined with the return of young Roumanians who had studied in Paris and in Italy, brought this most easterly of the Latin peoples once again within the orbit of Western civilization. From Paris, too, came a new Liberalism, doctrinaire no doubt and dangerous, which sought to change the whole structure of Roumanian society. The consequence was that 1848 was a storm-year in Wallachia, and the revolutionaries, who succeeded for a brief period in establishing their authority over the Principality, propounded theories of agrarian reform which found active support among the peasantry. But reaction triumphed for the nonce, thanks to the hostility of many of the influential boyars and the intervention of Russian and Turkish troops.

The Crimean War, however, was of vital importance to the Principalities, for the Treaty of Paris (1856) established a new order of things and definitely excluded Russian influence. Moreover Napoleon III, himself an ardent believer in the principle of nationality, had been won over by the Roumanian liberals and openly favoured the creation of a united and independent Roumania, to which was to be added the southern part of Bessarabia, ceded by Russia under the Treaty. Good fortune favoured the Imperial schemer in this the first, and, from the point of view of France, probably the only successful application of his favourite theory, and when Alexander Cuza was elected Prince by the Assemblies of both Moldavia and Wallachia in January, 1859, Napoleon succeeded in obtaining the recognition of the *fait accompli*

by the Powers. The year which saw the expulsion of the Austrians from the greater part of the Italian peninsula thus opened with the union of the Danubian Principalities and the birth of a new national State which, in its turn, was destined one day to demand a reckoning with the Empire of the Hapsburgs.

Prince Cuza was a liberal full of reforming zeal, and was convinced from the first that the emancipation of the serfs was long overdue. The terms of the Paris Convention of 1859 expressly referred to this question, as witness Article 46:

> Tous les privilèges, exemptions et monopoles dont jouissent encore certaines classes seront abolis; et il sera procédé sans retard à la révision de la loi qui règle les rapports des propriétaires du sol avec les cultivateurs en vue d'améliorer l'état des paysans.

The Protecting Powers thus declared themselves definitely opposed to the regime established by the "Règlement Organique," but it is significant that the ownership of the land by the boyars is now placed beyond question. With this as their starting-point the nobles carried on an active campaign in favour of a policy of emancipation without expropriation. The existence of a landless proletariat would have been most welcome to them—but not to the Liberal reformers. For these latter, peasant proprietorship offered the only guarantee for the future, for how could national existence be assured unless the majority of the people were interested in maintaining the existing order? The boyars, on the other hand, though forced to admit that emancipation was inevitable, made every effort to maintain their estates intact and advanced arguments which are perfectly familiar to all students of agrarian reform. Peasant cultivation, they argued, was backward, and therefore expropriation would lead to a diminution in production and a shortage of labour. Prince Cuza, however, was determined upon this work of social justice and, despairing of overcoming the opposition of the assembly of nobles, he effected a *coup d'état*, and issued an Agrarian Law on August 24, 1864, on his own

responsibility. This law, which was rather hastily conceived and contained certain very serious defects, as we shall see later, nevertheless marked the end of the period of oppression and the beginning of a new era of hope for the down-trodden peasantry of the Principalities.

It followed earlier measures in enacting that the landlord was under no circumstances obliged to surrender more than two-thirds of his land; but this time the surrender was complete and the peasant became full proprietor of his share. Moreover, the allotment was to be made as of old on the basis of the number of cattle he owned. An approximate survey of the quota assignable to the respective categories of peasants is given in the following table:

Acres

| | Wallachia | Moldavia |
|---|---|---|
| Garden and House Land: Hill | ¼ | ½ |
| (To all alike) Plain | ¾ | ½ |
| Fruntaşi, with 4 oxen | 13½ | 19½ |
| Mijlocaşi, „ 2 „ | 9½ | 14 |
| Codaşi, „ 0 „ | 5¾ | 8¾ |

All the old services and payments were abolished; and the lord was compensated by the issue of special government stock which amounted in the aggregate to 107 million gold lei (francs)[1]. The emancipated peasantry themselves had to pay fifteen annual instalments varying from 49 lei to 19 lei according to the category in which they fell. It is perhaps necessary to emphasize that this compensation was not in respect of the land which they acquired but solely for the claims to services and the various monopolies which the lords surrendered. After the Law of 1864, of course, the proprietary rights of the boyars in the land retained by them could no longer be called in question.

Of very great importance was the Clause (Article vii)

[1] The original interest was 10 per cent., but this was later converted into 6 per cent. and finally into 4 per cent. stock.

which declared that the newly-created small holdings were inalienable for a period of thirty years. The government had no intention of making over the land to the peasantry in order that the new owners should sell at a profit. Still less did they desire to see these lands pass into the hands of speculators and usurers for whom preying on the peasantry would have been only too simple in the absence of some legal restriction of this kind. It was enacted therefore that in the event of a peasant dying childless or being obliged to sell his land for some special purpose, the village commune should have a right of pre-emption.

Childless widows and those who were unfit for farm work or who, though dwellers in the rural districts, had not previously been liable for dues and services, were accorded merely the legal quota for house and garden.

As a result of this law 467,840 peasant families were emancipated and placed in full possession of their lands. The distribution of the total area thus acquired in the different provinces, at the expense of the boyar estates and the State domains respectively, is shown in the following table[1]:

(In hectares)

| Province | From State Domains | From Boyar Estates | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Moldavia | 187,689 | 447,546 | 635,235 |
| Wallachia | 248,501 | 532,000 | 780,501 |
| Oltenia | 135,786 | 214,736 | 350,522 |
| Total | 571,976 | 1,194,282 | 1,766,258 |

The grants of land to each family were larger, as we have seen, in Moldavia than in Wallachia; and were smallest of all in the more thickly populated province of Oltenia.

[1] This and the following table are taken from Creanga, *Grundbesitzverteilung und Bauernfrage in Rumänien*, I, pp. 64 and 66, *Schmollers Forschungen*, No. 132, 1908, where there is a wealth of statistical material. (1 hectare = 2·47 acres.)

It is not without interest to summarize the geographical distribution of the various categories of peasantry who benefited by this law.

NUMBER OF FAMILIES

| Province | Fruntaşi | Mijlocaşi | Codaşi | Peasants with house and garden only | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moldavia | 6,506 | 59,797 | 57,854 | 31,942 | 156,099 |
| Wallachia | 53,455 | 91,441 | 45,817 | 17,179 | 207,892 |
| Oltenia | 11,951 | 50,837 | 30,461 | 10,600 | 103,849 |
| Total | 71,912 | 202,075 | 134,132 | 59,721 | 467,840 |

It will be seen that over 43 per cent. of the emancipated peasants owned two oxen and a cow, this class of "medium" peasantry being most strongly represented in Oltenia and least numerous in Moldavia. Indeed the consequences of direct exploitation by the boyars in the latter province are clearly apparent in our table, for Moldavia leads in its percentage of peasantry with no oxen and of the completely landless proletariat.

At the time of the emancipation, the number of free peasants—whether "knesi," "moşneni," "rezeşi" or "mazilii"—seems to have been in the neighbourhood of 107,000 families, who, between them, owned nearly as much land as the emancipated peasantry actually acquired under Cuza's law. They were most strongly represented in Oltenia, where the tradition of independence has survived right down to the present day, and in the mountain districts generally.

## § II

## CRITICISM OF THE REFORM OF 1864

Alexander Cuza was a man of generous impulses and considerable culture, but unfortunately for the country he governed, he was of a somewhat dictatorial nature and failed completely to conciliate the dominant aristocracy. For these reasons he has received more than his fair share of abuse—which only too frequently takes the place of honest criticism in Roumanian political life—and in particular has been execrated for his *coup d'état*. If, however, one remembers the long record of resistance to reform on the part of the boyars, it will appear to be more than doubtful whether a solution of the agrarian question would have been possible on constitutional lines. Be this as it may, the law of 1864 was certainly hastily conceived, imperfectly prepared and frequently badly applied. Indeed the essence of the criticism which has been levelled against it is that it made no adequate provision for the application of its provisions. In a word it bore unmistakable marks of its revolutionary origin.

Many peasants who were entitled to benefit under the Act were passed over, while there does not appear to have been any legal arrangement for ascertaining the size of peasant holdings prior to the emancipation. The preliminary statistical survey which was really indispensable, was not made, with the result that the boyars were often able successfully to assert a claim to land to which they were not entitled. Moreover the actual distribution was carried out in such a manner that all the worst land fell to the share of the peasantry. Some cases are even reported in which the allotted holdings were so bad that the peasants paid their emancipation money but refused the land. It was also quite usual for all the land in the immediate neighbourhood of the village to be kept by the lord while the peasant received his share several miles away from his home. Moreover, despite Article 16, which

aimed at the consolidation of peasant holdings, the emancipated serf often found that his small property consisted of several small lots far removed from one another.

All these disadvantages were the natural result of the imperfect drafting of the Act itself, which thus placed the peasant in a variety of ways at the mercy of his lord. But bad as these results were, they became infinitely worse as the growth of population led to still further subdivisions of the soil.

In certain cases it was provided that peasants who failed to receive land under the Act should be settled on the Crown domains. In this manner a further 48,342 families received 228,329 has. of land[1], the greater part being, as might have been expected, in the more thickly populated provinces of Wallachia and Oltenia. Some of these peasants were newly-married couples, while others came from districts where the quota which the boyar had to surrender had already been reached. Despite these supplementary provisions, however, many of the rural population still remained without any land of their own, and in course of time their numbers increased considerably. Moreover the constant subdivisions which ensued—for amongst the Roumanians it has always been the custom on the death of the father to divide the family land among all the sons equally—soon made the diminished holdings quite insufficient for the support of a peasant family. In a country, therefore, where there was land in abundance, and much of it among the richest land in Europe, the lack of a clear programme of internal colonization resulted in a standard of living which was appallingly low, side by side with a very real land-hunger on the part of the peasantry. The Emancipation Act of 1864 did not even provide a satisfactory solution of the agrarian problems of that time and entirely failed to lay the foundations of a sound land-policy for the future. However much we may blame Cuza for his share in this settlement, we should not however forget that

[1] Creanga, *op. cit.* I, p. 72.

the principal culprits were the boyars—those "last ditchers" who refused to compromise one iota and whose opposition could only be overcome, and even so, only in part, by forcible means.

## § III

## LATER AGRARIAN LEGISLATION

It soon became apparent that the Law of 1864 was far from being the last word in the agrarian history of Roumania. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that from that time to this no question has been more to the fore in Parliament no less than in the press and in popular politics than that of agrarian reform—a fact natural enough in view of the overwhelming importance of agriculture in the national economy. Unfortunately, however, Cuza's Act, for the reasons which have already been outlined, did not even provide a starting-point for future development. The statesmen of the country were content meanwhile to attempt to patch up the old system, their efforts to this end being particularly noticeable after the various peasant risings which occurred during the period[1], rather than to undertake the formidable task of placing the whole question on a new basis.

Of all these patchwork Acts—and their name is legion—the most important were those of 1881, 1889 and 1907. The first two were directed towards the sale of parts of the Crown domains; while the last established a Land Bank (Casa Rurala) intended, amongst other things, to enable the peasantry to purchase land in the open market.

The Act of 1881, which was twice amended, aimed at providing land for landless peasants or for those who owned less than 12 acres. In principle the lots were not to exceed

[1] There were more or less serious disturbances in 1888, 1889, 1894, 1900 and 1907—of which the last was much the most important (*vide post*).

12 acres; and in actual practice the net result of these enactments was that 4970 peasants obtained 23,070 has. of Crown land. In one or two districts a sensible amelioration of the position of the peasantry was achieved, but the country as a whole was not affected.

The Law of 1889 followed a peasant rising and was of greater consequence. According to its terms, Crown lands were offered on fixed terms to peasants with less than 12 acres, in lots of 12 acres each, with the proviso that no peasant could acquire more than one lot in this manner. By 1906 the application of this Act had resulted in the acquisition by 105,165 peasants of 526,233 has. of land.

These laws also directed that small farms of 24 and 42 acres should be offered to the peasantry for sale by auction, but less than 30,000 has. was actually disposed of in this manner throughout the whole country. This represented the only attempt at establishing in Roumania a middle class of farms intermediate between the small peasant plots on the one hand and the large estates on the other. But the problem had not been sufficiently studied and the need for determined action was not adequately realized, with the result that the whole experiment proved a failure. Under the Cuza Law there had been no discrimination as to the fitness of the individual peasants and it was decided that all should be treated alike. Under these later Acts nearly two million acres were transferred from the Crown to the peasantry; but the money realized therefrom seems to have disappeared in current expenditure while the agrarian problem was merely postponed. A final solution remained as far away as ever.

The great development in the agricultural production of the country towards the close of last century did practically nothing to improve the lot of the peasantry. Grain exports rose by leaps and bounds, but almost the whole advantage therefrom accrued to the large landowners. It should not be supposed, however, that the boyars usually cultivated their own estates, either directly or through a bailiff. Taking all

the land of the country owned in estates of 120 acres[1] and over, we find that nearly 57 per cent. was leased, the proportion being highest in Wallachia and lowest in the Dobrogea. The larger the properties, the higher in general the proportion of land leased. Indeed in the case of estates over 7350 acres—and these formed a very important element in the country, the corresponding percentage was over 72 per cent. Having regard to the land-hunger of the peasantry it is not surprising that land should have been leased to them on very onerous terms indeed. Metayage holdings often contributed as much as half of the produce raised. Much more serious, however, were the Trusts organized by certain enterprising Jews, who attempted to monopolize the available land. The very large estates in Moldavia provided a particularly happy hunting-ground and the peasants were exploited ruthlessly. Their low standard of culture combined with a desperate need of money to make them sell their labour for next to nothing, while the taverns, which had also come very largely into Jewish hands, provided an excellent auxiliary in the work of exploitation.

The prosperity of the landed classes, however, did not prevent their falling into debt; and this made the tempting offers of Jewish and other would-be lessees practically irresistible[2]. The luxury and indolence of the boyar class demanded that the peasantry should be pitilessly exploited; and the landowners and large lessees together practically controlled the country, thanks to the system of class representation which prevailed in the elections. Peasant deputies

[1] 50 has., strictly equal to 122½ acres. In this section we have preferred to refer to the different categories of land in their approximate equivalent in acres. For these statistics *v.* Creanga, *op. cit.* I, pp. 140 and 148.

[2] It is possible, of course, to exaggerate the rôle played by the Jews. In the total of all leased estates over 120 acres they only figured for 13½ per cent., while foreigners (notably Greeks, Armenians, etc.) held about the same proportion. Of the very large estates, however, these two classes together farmed over 56 per cent.; while the Jews alone farmed 72 per cent. of these categories in Moldavia, where the abuses were by far the greatest.

were very few and quite impotent in the Lower House, while they were totally unrepresented in the Senate. The Laws governing rural labour contracts, moreover, were constantly disregarded in practice and the machinery of justice made it exceedingly difficult for the peasants to obtain redress.

In face of this scientific exploitation, and all the misery it involved, it is not surprising that the rural population was finally driven to desperation. Unprincipled agitators found here a fruitful field for their activities, and in March, 1907, a Peasant Revolt broke out which seemed likely at one moment to develop into civil war. It was, however, put down in time —though not without some very harsh measures of repression against the insurgents.

This movement naturally brought the agrarian question very much to the fore in political circles, and the Liberal government which came into power during the period of revolt, while declaring its adherence to the principle of compensation for the landowners whose country seats had been destroyed and who had otherwise suffered damage from the actions of the insurgents, nevertheless stated clearly that its main task was to improve the condition of the peasantry and prevent the recurrence of similar manifestations. A series of laws were therefore passed with this end in view. An attempt was made to fix maximum rentals and minimum wage rates for rural workers by statute; though more important still perhaps was the Law creating a Land Bank. Half the capital of this institution was to be provided by the State, and its activities were to be directed towards purchasing land as and when it would be offered for sale by the large owners and dividing it up among the peasantry. Another law provided for the legal recognition of peasant associations, called "obștii," to be created for the purpose of purchasing or renting land from the large owners or from the State. Most of the land so obtained was to be divided up among the individual members for exploitation, though pasture and forest land remained in common while proprietary rights in

all such land were vested in the association as a legal person. Finally a Law was passed against lessee trusts, which restricted the total of land in the hands of any one lessee to approximately 10,000 acres.

As a result of this and other legislation the position of the peasantry improved sensibly, both from the economic and from the general cultural point of view. But even so this too was only a patchwork settlement, and in the years immediately preceding the World War it became more and more apparent that the whole system of rural property would have to be placed on a new basis.

*Chapter Three*

# The Agrarian History of Roumania III

THE NEW PROVINCES

I. The Bucovina
II. Bessarabia
III. The Dobrogea
IV. Transylvania

## § I

## THE BUCOVINA

At the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War in 1774 Austria, as we have already seen[1], asserted a claim to a portion of northern Moldavia, and in the following year a territory of about 4035 square miles, which was henceforth known as the Bucovina, was definitely ceded to her by Turkey.

The population of the Province at the date of its cession was very small, and probably did not exceed 75,000 inhabitants altogether[2], or about one-eleventh of the present total. More than half of the land belonged to the Church or to the numerous monasteries—though most of this was mountain forest. In the district of Câmpulung, which was also in the mountains, the free peasantry (or "rezeşi") still maintained their independent status, as was also the case, curiously enough, in the other Câmpulung in Wallachia, at the same date. In the rest of the Province, which included most of the arable in the North and East, the land was in the hands of the boyars on whom depended the "robi" (gipsy slaves) and the "vecini" or serfs. The free peasantry were not sensibly affected by the change in allegiance. The rest of the rural population, however, soon began to feel the effects of the enlightened absolutism of Joseph II. For our present purpose it will be best to consider the activities of the Austrian authorities in their relation to the Church, the "robi" and the "vecini."

### THE CHURCH

Some ten years after the occupation most of the monasteries were closed by the authorities, and in 1786 an Imperial decree reorganized the Greek Orthodox Church in the Province, separating it from the rest of the Moldavian Church.

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 16.
[2] Kaindl, *Das Ansiedlungswesen in der Bukowina*, p. 4.

All the property of the ecclesiastical authorities, as well as of the suppressed monasteries, was united into a "Religious Trust" ("Fondsgut"), with a special administration appointed by the civil authorities. This fund was to provide for the upkeep of the Church and of the various charitable and educational activities that might be connected therewith. The Emperor himself became Patron of the Church, and the creation of the Trust made the task of regulating the relationship between the various classes of the rural population much simpler for the authorities.

While the Province was united for administrative purposes with Galicia certain misappropriations seem to have been made in favour of the Roman Catholic Church (1790), and in 1804 some of the Trust lands were sold to help pay the expenses of the Napoleonic wars. On the whole, however, the estates seem to have been administered in the interests of the Orthodox Church; and since the introduction of the Regulation of 1875, the immense forests have probably been exploited in an efficient manner. In 1905[1] the Trust still owned some 660,000 acres of land, or over a quarter of the area of the Province, of which only about 100,000 acres were arable and pasture, the rest being forest.

## THE "ROBI"

The gipsies, who had long been settled in the Principalities, were veritable slaves. This status was recognized, moreover, by Mavrocordato in his Uricariul of 1749 in which we read:

> Les tziganes sont complètement asservis et doivent avec femmes et enfants servir d'une manière permanente leurs maîtres.

They had no protection whatsoever against their lord, who enjoyed powers of life and death over them, and who usually used them as personal slaves. Moreover they could not be emancipated, while any Moldavian who married a gipsy himself joined the ranks of the "robi."

[1] *Vide Handbuch der Oesterreichischen Statistik* for that year.

In 1784 there were 567 gipsy families in the Bucovina[1], of whom the greater part belonged to the monasteries, for which they usually worked, strangely enough, as agricultural labourers. The need for keeping on good terms with the boyars in the early years of the occupation prevented the Austrian authorities from abolishing this slave status—which existed nowhere else in the Empire at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1785, however, the "robi" on estates belonging to the "Religious Trust" were transformed into "vecini"; and when an article of the Austrian penal code of 1811 abolished slavery of every description throughout the Empire, gipsies in the Bucovina naturally acquired the right to personal freedom and to the protection of the law. Not many of them however settled on the land, and for the most part they became wandering artisans and musicians—occupations which they have kept right down to the present day.

## THE "VECINI"

The acquisition of the Bucovina by Austria came at a time when the strong tendency to direct cultivation by the boyars, which was the most characteristic feature of the agrarian history of the Principality of Moldavia in the second half of the eighteenth century, had not made itself felt to any appreciable extent in this frontier territory. The sparseness of the population[2] and the very unsettled conditions were alike unfavourable to the landlord-cultivator, and the payment of tithe was much the most important duty which the peasant owed his lord. It is worth repeating that the fact that the transition from a "Grundherrschaft" to a "Gutsherrschaft" had not taken place at the time of the occupation is of capital importance; for while the Austrian authorities might respect the existing order they were certainly not prepared, in the "Zeit der Aufklärung," to allow the lord to

[1] This account of the unfree population in the Bucovina is based mainly on Grünberg's excellent article in *Schmollers Jahrbuch* for 1900.

[2] In 1775 there were 22 boyar families, 175 mazilii, 149 rezeşi and 14,992 vecin families in the Province. *Vide* Kaindl, *op. cit.* p. 4.

extend his claims, and still less to introduce the labour services and *banalités* which were then coming into vogue in the rest of the Principality.

The position of the peasant in the Bucovina was however a very wretched one. The Emperor and the new military governors soon came to the conclusion that the lack of security was really responsible for this state of things, and determined to provide a definite legal basis for the serf which should correspond so far as possible with that in force in the lands of the Bohemian Crown. The analogy was not however easy to establish at law and the Patent of 1782 was on the Galician model, and simply enacted that a "vecin" could leave his holding provided he furnished his lord with a suitable substitute. This, under the conditions then prevailing in the Province, fell far short of the institution of freedom of movement, which the Emperor was anxious to establish. At the same time a limit was set to the arbitrary demands of the boyars—who were later to complain that the authorities had always been violent protagonists of the peasant cause.

The main features of the structure of rural society have been dealt with in an earlier section. Suffice it here to say that the "community holding[1]" predominated in the lowlands of the Bucovina, and that proprietary rights had not been legally defined, save in the case of reclaimed land which became the property of the peasant who brought it into cultivation. On the other hand the boyar was under a customary obligation to provide the "vecin" with the land necessary to support his family and his cattle. We have seen how this custom was interpreted in the rest of Moldavia. Indeed its lack of precision in matters of detail made it practically worthless as a defence against the exactions of the boyars. In the Bucovina, however, the first step towards a definite settlement of the question of title to real property

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 9. The general structure was otherwise the same as in the rest of Moldavia.

was taken in the Decree of February 24, 1787. In this document "peasant lands[1]" were defined as being those actually occupied by peasants on November 1, 1786—the date of the Union of the Province with Galicia. In this manner a limit was set once and for all to the pretensions of the boyars—though so far the question of possession alone was settled, while the much more complicated problem of proprietary rights was conveniently shelved. The Decree also attempted to guarantee each individual peasant holding, but as the "community holding" showed signs of considerable vitality and survived these reforms, this part of the new legislation remained a dead letter. As is well known, Joseph II died before he was able to institute the system of peasant proprietorship, which he himself regarded as the logical outcome of his other reforms, in the Bucovina no less than in the older Provinces of the Empire.

The Austrian authorities had adopted the "Chrysow" of Prince Gregory Ghika (issued in 1766), which provided that the "vecin" owed his lord tithe (the so-called "dijma") and twelve days' service annually. It is interesting to notice that this enactment was of no real importance in Moldavia, as it was never observed. The new rulers desired above all to maintain the *status quo*, and it is unfortunate that their boyar advisers were able to persuade them that a later "Chrysow" of 1777, which naturally would not otherwise have applied to the Bucovina, really only codified existing practice. It was therefore adopted and the Bucovinan peasant thus found himself saddled with certain additional labour services and with a few rather irksome, and quite new, *banalités*. Although these were maintained for the most part during the Josephine era and after, the lot of the "vecini" was nevertheless much improved, for not only did these regulations represent a maximum of services, but in certain cases the year-work was

[1] "Bäuerliche Realitäten"—as opposed to those which were "landtäflich" or "bürgerlich." It is amusing to see these old Austro-Bohemian terms introduced into the Bucovina—where they did not apply in the very least.

fixed at six days instead of twelve. Moreover the lords were also placed under a statutory obligation to provide their peasants with corn for food and for seed in times of distress.

Under Austrian rule the population of the Province increased very rapidly indeed, as the following figures show:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1775 | 75,000 (estimate) |
| 1807 | 208,498 |
| 1827 | 290,773 |
| 1846 | 370,673 |

The explanation of the phenomenal increase between 1775 and 1807 is to be found in the fact that large numbers of peasants, chiefly of Ruthenian speech, were encouraged to move in from the adjoining lands. The Bucovina thus lost its predominantly Roumanian character, in spite of the arrival of a certain number of Roumanian-speaking peasants from Transylvania and the Principalities[1].

This movement of the population had very important economic consequences, for not only did it lead to the reclamation of much waste land but in addition it necessitated the transformation of pasture into arable so that the character of agricultural production in the plains and valleys underwent a complete change. At the same time the old "community holding" proved itself less and less suited to the new conditions and finally received its death sentence in an Imperial Resolution of 1835. Thus, although common pastures were maintained, an important contribution had been made to the broadly-conceived reforms of Joseph II—which were not however destined to be completed until the Revolution of 1848 had shaken the power of the Hapsburgs to its very foundation.

[1] Even at the time of the Austrian occupation, a considerable number of Ruthenes, or "Rusnaki" as they were then called, and as they still call themselves, lived on the borders of the Polish lands, from which they had migrated at an earlier date. As compared with that of the Roumanians, however, their number was fairly small. (A contemporary report states: "Ihre Zahl...ist minders beträchtlich.") Cf. Kaindl, *op. cit.* p. 111. The official encouragement of emigration practically ceased in 1803.

The "vecini" owed the lord small money dues in certain cases (such, for example, as for the right of cutting wood), but the pressure of population combined with the shortage of money in this the least developed Province of the Empire, to substitute service contracts instead. These were sometimes made too in place of the tithe payment, while the lord's superior bargaining power often led to the terms of the contract being very onerous, so much as seventy days' year-work being recorded in some cases. It is not surprising, therefore, that discontent became rife among the peasantry in the thirties and forties. An example of the prevailing mentality, though in a very acute form, was provided in the adjoining province of Galicia—where, it must be admitted, conditions were much worse than in the Bucovina—in the famous *jacquerie* of 1846. When, therefore, the Vienna government had recovered from the first shock of the revolution which broke out two years later, it is not surprising that one of its first acts should be an attempt to deal with rural discontent in the two easternmost provinces of the Empire —especially as the nobility were here of Polish or Roumanian speech. The Patent of August 9, 1848, applied to the Bucovina the conditions enacted four months earlier for Galicia. It decreed the abolition of all feudal services, with compensation at a later date at State expense.

In the newly-elected Reichstag seven of the eight members for the Bucovina were peasants who not only opposed all compensation to the landlords but even demanded compensation for the peasantry for the illegal exactions of the boyars in the past. In fact, however, the reform in the Bucovina was planned according to the principles applied to the other Provinces. In consequence, the Imperial Law of September 7, 1848, did not sanction the principle of compensation at State expense which had been promised for the Province in the earlier Patent. An attempt was made, however, in the following year[1] to divide the costs of compensation

[1] Patent of March 4, 1849.

between the Provincial authorities and the emancipated peasants, but this soon proved too heavy a task for the latter, with the result that in 1853[1] practically the whole burden was thrown on to the former. The Provincial government itself, however, was unable to meet these charges, and the financial arrangements of the Reform seemed to be on the point of breaking down as a result of the poverty of the Bucovina when, in 1863, the State stepped in and provided the necessary financial assistance. The final application of the Reform of 1848 was thus not actually completed until the early seventies.

The distribution of property in the Bucovina on the eve of the World War will be considered in a later section. Suffice it here to state that, whatever may have been the defects of the Austrian administration, and they were certainly many, it did at least succeed in fixing a limit to the exactions of the boyars in the earlier years of the occupation, with the result that the subdivision of property finally achieved in consequence of the Reform of 1848 established peasant proprietorship on a much wider scale than was the case in any of the other Provinces of what is now Greater Roumania[2]. The relative well-being of the mass of the people —despite the fact that the Bucovina remained the most backward of the Hapsburg Crown lands—was thus established, in face of the opposition of the native aristocracy, by a foreign autocracy which it is now the fashion to hold responsible for all the ills to which the South-Central European flesh is heir.

[1] Patent of October 23, 1853.

[2] With the sole exception of the Dobrogea—which is a rather special case. *Vide post*, p. 65.

## § II

## BESSARABIA

Of the territories of the Principalities no part had suffered more from the ravages of war and the invasions of nomad tribes than the Moldavian frontier lands between the Prut and the Nistru which were annexed by Russia in 1812. At that time indeed the province of Bessarabia was only very sparsely peopled and the Russians soon began to encourage immigration. In 1814 a group of Germans from Würtemberg settled as colonists in the Bugeac steppes in the South, while, in course of time, numbers of Bulgarians found here a safe refuge from Turkish oppression. In Bessarabia, moreover, the government tolerated the Raskolniki (*Old Believers*), who were proscribed in Russia proper, and groups of these interesting people settled in various parts of the Province. In the north-west corner, and more especially in what is now the department of Hotin, the Slav element was reinforced by the influx of numbers of Little Russians, who, as we have seen, had also been moving into the Bucovina towards the close of the eighteenth century. Despite this increase in the number of foreigners, to which must be added the new Russian civil and military officials, who were, however, for the most part birds of passage only, the Roumanian element has nevertheless predominated in the Province down to the present day.

Agrarian conditions prior to 1812 had developed here on much the same lines as in the rest of Moldavia. The sparseness of the population, however, had ensured an adequate amount of land to the peasants and had mitigated against the development of boyar cultivation, which was so characteristic a feature of the agrarian history of Moldavia proper in the second half of the eighteenth century. After 1812 the boyars who remained in the Province soon became accustomed to Russian rule and were often, as a matter of fact, among the most extreme champions of Tsarist reaction. The

new regime, therefore, did nothing to weaken their position as against the peasantry, though the status of the colonists was naturally a favourable one from the beginning.

In Russia proper, the climax of oppression was reached in the reign of Catharine II—the philosopher Queen. Half-hearted attempts at reform by the ill-fated Tsar Paul did little to improve matters, and the reaction which set in during the later years of the reign of the erstwhile Liberal reformer Alexander I, and which continued throughout the reign of Nicholas I, maintained a state of affairs which profoundly shocked the conscience of all the more enlightened elements of Russian society. At the date of the annexation, therefore, and for many years after, the position of the peasantry was probably better in Bessarabia than in the governments of Great and Little Russia. The process of emancipation, however, was not the same in all parts of the Province on account of the political settlement effected as a result of the Crimean War. By the Peace of Paris (1856) a portion of Southern Bessarabia, corresponding roughly to the modern districts of Cahul, Ismail and Bolgrad, was reincorporated in the Principality of Moldavia, to which it remained down to 1878, when it was reannexed by Russia in grateful recognition of Roumanian co-operation against the Turks in the war of the previous year. This territory thus came within the scope of Prince Cuza's Agrarian Reform of 1864; while the rest of the Province was included in the lands affected by the epoch-making ukase of 1861.

As a result of the greater abundance of land in Southern Bessarabia the peasants here obtained a larger quota under Cuza's Decree than did those of Moldavia proper. The approximate distribution was as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fruntaşi with 4 oxen | ... | 22½ acres |
| Mijlocaşi „ 2 „ | ... | 15½ „ |
| Codaşi „ 0 „ | ... | 10¼ „ |

The allotment of arable (5¼ acres) is included in the above totals and was the same for each category.

Otherwise emancipation was carried out in the same manner as in the rest of the Principality. If it is borne in mind that the colonists were a particularly important element in this area, it will be apparent that the preponderance of small and medium holdings was already well established when this part of Bessarabia was handed back to Russia at the Congress of Berlin.

Much the greater part of this frontier Province, however, remained throughout under Russian rule, and though it is impossible within the scope of this present work to go in any detail into the vast subject of agrarian reform in the Empire of the Tsars, it is nevertheless essential to outline the progress of events in Bessarabia. This is the more important in view of the fact that Cuza's reform of 1864 was undoubtedly speeded up by the Russian precedent three years earlier, while the incorporation of Bessarabia in the territories of Greater Roumania in 1918 made agrarian reform on a large scale absolutely inevitable throughout the length and breadth of the new kingdom.

## THE CHURCH

At the time of the Russian occupation a fairly favourable policy was adopted towards the Moldavian inhabitants. The Bessarabian Church was treated as a semi-autonomous Exarchate, and the ownership of Church lands was respected. The greater part of these estates belonged to Moldavian monasteries, and, although these were situated outside the new Province, their proprietary rights were nevertheless confirmed, under the somewhat special condition that a specified proportion of their revenues should be spent for religious and educational purposes in Bessarabia itself. A considerable portion of the ecclesiastical estates survived the Reforms of 1861 and later decrees alike, and prior to the World War nearly 5 per cent. of the total area of the Province still belonged to these "foreign" monasteries.

## THE COLONISTS

We have already seen that numbers of Germans from Würtemberg moved into Southern Bessarabia almost immediately after the Russian occupation. This movement was in continuation of the general policy initiated by Catharine the Great in 1762 for Russia proper and continued by Paul I thirty-eight years later for the Mennonite Colonies of Noworossiya (New Russia). The settlers were accorded a large number of special privileges, such as exemption from military service, and received a grant of 65 desyatines (about 175 acres) of land for each family. The Special Care Committee for the South-Russian Colonies had its headquarters at Chişinau in the late twenties, but was removed to Odessa in 1833, and was finally abolished in 1871. By an Act, passed on June 4 of that year, the special status of the Colonists (save only the Mennonites, who were in a particularly privileged position) was abolished, and they were treated on the same footing as the so-called "state-peasants." The land grants worked out at an average of about 10 desyatines, or 27 acres, a head, and an annual "rent-tax" of about 6 roubles a head was imposed. Although their farms were henceforth nominally classed as "nadyel" land[1], the colonists continued in reality to form a special class, and the Germans and Bulgarians of Bessarabia—for the Bulgarian colonists soon learned to adopt the more up-to-date methods of their German neighbours—have remained down to the present time as probably the most stable and the most enlightened section of the population.

## THE PEASANTRY

The change of suzerainty did nothing to ameliorate the position of the Moldavian "vecini" in Bessarabia. In the north of the Province and along the banks of the Nistru, a certain number of "mazilii" and "rezeşi" successfully maintained their independent status. Some of the "vecini"

[1] *Vide post*, p. 62.

too managed to profit by the forced sales of the lands of those boyars who "opted" for Moldavia in 1812, and acquired peasant holdings at prices well below their market value[1]. But the total number of the free peasantry cannot have been great, and the Russified Moldavian boyars together with the Greeks and Armenians who busily acquired land and influence in the economic life of the country, were far from being solicitous as to the welfare of the unfree peasants.

The actual work of emancipation in Bessarabia, as in the rest of Tsarist Russia, was due to the enlightened attitude of Alexander II. The Crimean War had shown the essential weaknesses of his great Empire, and he therefore appointed a Committee in each government to report on the whole question of agrarian reform. The great majority of these bodies reported unfavourably, and Bessarabia was naturally a stronghold of reaction. In spite of all opposition, however, the liberal autocrat forced the Emancipation Law of February 19, 1861, upon an unwilling aristocracy. The peasantry acquired thereby a legal status and their personal freedom was assured. In addition the land then actually worked by the peasantry was to be taken away from the owners and handed over to the cultivators on a deferred purchase system. This, at least, was the principle to be aimed at, but by a series of local laws of the same year a maximum scale was established, which limited the claims of the peasantry, while a minimum scale, equal to one-third of the maximum, guaranteed that the reform should not remain an absolute dead letter. These scales varied according to the nature of the locality, and in Bessarabia the allotments varied between 8 and 12 desyatines, a scale very considerably in excess of that applied in most other parts of Russia.

This land, which was known as "nadyel," was not however made over to the individual peasants, but to local communes, called "mirs," whose duty it was to divide it up periodically for cultivation. The payments to be made by the peasantry

[1] Jorga, *Geschichte des rumänischen Volkes*, II, pp. 409–10.

to the lord were proportionately higher for smaller holdings, and arrangements were made by which they could be effected in services instead of in money, although this was only envisaged as a provisional measure.

Perhaps the chief weakness of this Reform was that, while the land allotted to the peasantry might conceivably have sufficed to meet the needs of the rural population in 1861, it soon proved hopelessly inadequate in view of the great increase in population which has been the principal feature of the last sixty years, in Bessarabia even more than in the rest of Russia. The amount of "nadyel" might however be increased by purchases made by agreement with the landowners. The Bessarabian boyars soon proved themselves adepts at running into debt, excelling those of almost all the other Russian governments in this particular. Thanks to the fact that the local peasantry are at once more industrious and more enterprising than the Russians or the Ukrainians, Bessarabia headed the list of Russian governments in the matter of purchase from the large owners, and by the end of the nineteenth century some 800,000 acres had thus passed into peasant hands[1]. The ever-growing indebtedness of the boyars led moreover to a continuation of this tendency right down to the outbreak of the Great War.

The compensation envisaged in the Reform of 1861 was fixed on an absurdly high basis. In the early eighties, therefore, considerable reductions were effected in the schedule of payments, while a law of July 14, 1888, which applied specially to Bessarabia, enacted the final detachment of the peasant lands from the boyar estates, thereby creating complete peasant proprietorship in the Province. This, of course, had been the original intention of the promulgators of the Law of 1861, but so many practical difficulties had been encountered in its actual application that the process was not completed until twenty-seven years later.

Finally it came to be realized that the "mir" had failed to

[1] *Vide Foreign Office Peace Handbook*, Bessarabia, p. 40.

achieve that mystic happiness of a communistic type which for long has been believed, though quite wrongly, to have been the characteristic of the earliest Slavonic settlements[1]. In 1906, therefore, a law was passed, which aimed at the breaking up of the "mirs" and the legal establishment of permanent individual ownership in its place.

To the student of agrarian history no less than to the observant traveller, Russian rule in Bessarabia has proved itself anything but efficient. Communal ownership is foreign to the Moldavian peasant, and the lack of transport facilities which, no less than the absence of popular education, is the result of a calculated policy of Imperialist reaction, has combined with a general neglect of the economic and social well-being of the Province to make of Bessarabia the most backward part of the modern Roumanian Kingdom.

## § III

## THE DOBROGEA

As compensation for the forced cession of Southern Bessarabia to her Russian ally in 1878, the newly-established independent Principality of Roumania was given the northern portion of the Dobrogea, corresponding to the modern departments of Tulcea and Constanţa. By the Treaty of Bucarest which terminated the Second Balkan War in 1913, she acquired in addition the southern half of the Province, consisting of the two departments of Durustor and Caliacra, which she had claimed, but without success, at the Congress of Berlin.

The history of the Dobrogea, which is a quaint mosaic of peoples, need not long detain us. Down to about the year

[1] Recent research has shown that the Serbian "zadruga" was adopted first as a device for escaping the hearth tax (καπνικόν) of the Eastern Empire; while the "mir" is also the consequence of fiscal measures adopted by Peter the Great. *Vide* Prof. Peisker's admirable chapter in the *Camb. Med. Hist.* II, p. 422.

1400[1] it had vaguely formed part of the Bulgarian Empire, but had hardly been settled at all. With the advent of Ottoman rule, however, some Turkish colonists moved into the rich lands of the South and proprietary rights were acquired by members of the powerful class of the "begs." After 1600 some Tatars began to arrive in the neighbourhood of Tulcea in the North, and in the course of the nineteenth century the number of settlers in this area was added to by Bulgars, Germans and Roumanians from Bessarabia. A certain number of Roumanians, moreover, had moved into the middle of the Province over two centuries earlier[2], though Turks probably formed the majority in this area in 1878, as also in the new territory acquired to the South in 1913. Despite this ethnic variety—and we have mentioned neither the Lipovani and Găgăuti, who practically monopolize the fisheries of the Danubian delta, nor the Armenians and Greeks who together constitute the trading classes of the towns—the Dobrogea is to this day but sparsely peopled, and recent agrarian legislation which, as we shall see, applied exclusively to the two northern departments, was sometimes rather farcical by reason of the lack of inhabitants. In fact, some of the land expropriated was actually handed back on lease to its former owners!

For the most part, however, peasant proprietorship had been established in the Dobrogea prior to its acquisition by Roumania. The historical explanation of this phenomenon is not far to seek. With the advent of the Turks, the "begs" displaced any of the native Bulgarian aristocracy (called boyars, and differing in this title from that of the other Southern Slav lands) who might have existed in the Province. With the revolt of the janissaries in 1830, however, the power of the "begs" disappeared, and a decree of Sultan Mahmud II

[1] We do not, of course, refer to the earlier history of the Dobrogea; for enterprising Greek colonists had settled at Istria and elsewhere at least as early as 600 B.C., while Ovid spent his years of exile near the site of the busy modern port of Constanța.

[2] Jorga, *op. cit.* II, p. 389.

deprived them of their privileges and confiscated their estates. These latter were divided up among the cultivators in return for specified payments to the State and the foundation of peasant proprietorship was thus firmly laid. In the department of Constanţa, however, a few large estates existed at the time of the recent reform, though they were of comparatively modern origin. The departments of Durustor and Caliacra, on the other hand, were more thickly peopled than the northern half of the Province, and remained from 1878 to 1913 under Bulgarian law—which favoured the small owner in many ways. As a result, large estates, in the sense of recent legislation, were non-existent in 1918; and this fact provides an interesting basis of comparison for a study of the consequences of agrarian reform on agricultural production of recent years.

## § IV

## TRANSYLVANIA

The "Jobagiones Castrorum"

As early as the reign of Saint Stephen the importance of the mountain lands which radiate westwards from the main chain of the Carpathians had become apparent. Indeed the enlightened founder of the Hungarian kingdom himself instituted frontier posts, manned by royal soldiers—the so-called "jobagiones castrorum"—to defend this natural rampart against the barbarian hordes that would fain have followed the example set earlier by the Hun in breaking through to the rich plains beyond. In the twelfth century again, King Geza II invited numbers of "Saxons" from the Rhineland to settle in this Eastern March, and rumours of the existence of gold and silver and other precious metals led to an important colonizing movement in which nobles "more nobilium se gerentes" as we are told, participated side by side with peasants and townsfolk. To the North of the Saxon settlements—which centred for the most part then as now, round

Sibiu and Braşov—an important colony of free Magyar tribesmen called Szeklers, or Siculi, speaking a separate dialect and soon developing customs and institutions of their own was already settled and to them was entrusted the defence of the mountain passes. The origin of the Roumanian people in this district has been considered in an earlier chapter; for the present, therefore, it will suffice to mention that in the thirteenth century there are many indications of the existence of large numbers of Vlachs, as they were called, living in semi-autonomous tribal groups under their native chiefs—the "knesi"—and even united together in Voivodates. A document of the year 1222, which refers to the "terra Blacorum" and the "terra Siculorum," would lead us to infer that they were by no means exclusively nomadic herdsmen, even though many of them continued for centuries to drive their cattle for winter pasture into the Principalities founded by their kinsmen on the other side of the mountains. Traces of early settlements in the district of Maramureş and elsewhere, bear out this contention[1]; and in the course of the thirteenth century many Vlachs were to be found in the ranks of the "iobagiones castrorum." At this time the status of a "iobagio" was still a very honourable one, and the title was borne by the military commander of Transylvania himself[2].

Serfdom

In course of time, however, the "nobiles" and the "comites" whether consisting of Magyars or of Roumanian chieftains who had become ennobled under the new regime, usurped many of the privileges of the Hungarian Crown, and, as a natural result, the status of the former "royal soldiery" fell lower and lower. By the fourteenth century, indeed, the term "jobbagy" had become synonymous with that of "rustici," and is henceforth used exclusively to denote the serfs. A document of the year 1366 states that by an "antiqua et approbata regni consuetudo" the jobbagy were liable to the civil jurisdiction of their lords, even if they were them-

[1] Jorga, *op. cit.* I, p. 151.

[2] Jorga, *op. cit.* I, p. 211.

selves "knesi." In other words, as a decree of King Ladislas made clear eleven years later, all the Vlachs, save only those who had been ennobled by the Hungarian king, were henceforth to be considered as simple serfs. Even the Szeklers were developing a hierarchic organization under leaders known as "primores," though in the main they remained a free people, as did the Saxon colonists further South. The Vlachs, however, were completely disregarded and deprived of all political rights. Their native aristocracy had been greatly weakened by the earlier migration into the Principalities; and those who became ennobled were quickly Magyarized and thus lost to their own people. In the ranks of the ennobled Vlachs, though more favourably disposed to his own nation than the vast majority of his class, was John Hunyadi, the greatest "Hungarian" hero of the Middle Ages.

The fifteenth century was a period of almost incessant war against the Turks, and this led to the further development of the institution of serfdom. At the same time it opened up possibilities of resistance on the part of the despised "jobbagy," and in 1437 a united revolt of the Magyar and Vlach peasantry took place under the leadership of Vajdaháza, who was himself a Magyar. In the light of modern events there is something piquant in the fact that the Magyar nobility should fight for national existence under the leadership of a Magyarized Vlach, while the Vlachs themselves fought desperately under the lead of a Magyar. As early as the fifteenth century, in fact, the real issue is social rather than national, and so it has remained, in the main, right down to the present day despite the activities of Magyar nationalists who have always used patriotism as a convenient cloak to cover class aspirations. But let us return to the revolt of 1437. The demands of the insurgents centred on the right of migration and the right of inheritance to peasant holdings, both of which were being infringed by the dominant nobility. In face of the opposition of the three privileged nations—the Magyars, Szeklers and Saxons—the revolt naturally collapsed, and serfdom developed apace.

After the battle of Mohacs in 1526 Transylvania passed under Turkish suzerainty, and was governed by local princes down to the Peace of Satmar in 1711 when the country finally submitted to Hapsburg rule. This period, which is regarded by Magyars as the golden age of Transylvanian history, marks perhaps the nadir of the fortunes of the Vlach inhabitants of the land. Even Michael the Brave, who, as we have seen, was for a time Prince of Transylvania, not only did nothing for his kinsmen, but, in all probability abolished the right of migration here as in his native Principality[1].

In the eighteenth century the division of the country into Saxon, Magyar and Szekler "seats" or districts, was maintained. In those regions where the Saxons predominated, the position of the Roumanian peasantry was on the whole quite tolerable. In a great many cases, indeed, they owned the land which they cultivated, and where services were due, these were not for the most part a crushing burden. The situation was quite different in the Magyar counties, for here serfdom greatly predominated, and the lot of the despised jobbagy was far from being an enviable one. Their obligations varied considerably in the different localities. Under the heading of payment in kind, the serfs had to surrender the ninth part of their produce. In addition each household often had to present the lord with a lamb, a calf and specified quantities of honey-wax each year, while weaving had to be done and wood cut and hauled, in addition to labour service proper, which seems to have been fixed at about eighteen days' year-work, though this total may well have been exceeded in many districts[2]. Finally there was an annual money charge in respect of each house, while the lord enjoyed an almost complete monopoly of the sale of wines and spirits

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 13 and Slavici, *op. cit.* p. 60 *n.* The right of migration, abolished in Hungary after the peasant revolt of 1514, apparently still remained in Transylvania though it had long since become a dead letter in actual practice.

[2] For an account of the position of the peasant in the county of Satmar —which although not included in the historic Principality of Transylvania nevertheless forms part of modern Roumania, *vide* Marczali, *Hungary in the XVIIIth Century*, pp. 184 and 188.

in the village. To all this must be added the exactions of the county authorities and last but, in many cases not least, of the Imperial soldiery.

Horia's Revolt

While the reforms of Maria Theresa relieved the position of the jobbagy somewhat in Hungary proper, the serfs in Western Transylvania were slowly driven to desperation by the exactions of their Magyar lords, and in 1784 a serious peasant revolt broke out under the leadership of Neculae Horia. The movement was exclusively Vlach in character, and has often been regarded as one of the first manifestations of the new national spirit which was to acquire such force in the following century. In reality, however, nationalist aspirations at this time were negative rather than positive. The movement was above all anti-Magyar[1], and was in no sense directed against the Hapsburgs. The two principal demands of the insurgents were that the jobbagy status should be abolished in return for military service and that Roumanian *or German* officials should take the place of the Magyars in Roumanian districts. The revolt soon became a violent class war in which the "cultured nobility" were not to be outdone in atrocities by the "uncouth peasantry." It was ultimately suppressed with the aid of the Imperial soldiery, and the victorious magnates at once demanded the re-establishment of all their old privileges. They assured the Emperor that "the nature of the lawless nation which lives in this country is such that it can only be governed by terroristic methods."

True to this principle Horia and his principal confederates were broken on the wheel; though, far from ordering the eviction of all the insurgents and their forcible migration to the Bucovina, as the magnates demanded, Joseph II issued a decree on August 22, 1785, abolishing the jobbagy status and re-establishing the right of migration.

It appeared then as though it were not in vain that Horia

[1] It must, of course, be admitted that almost all nationalist movements begin as a manifestation of opposition to another and dominant nationality.

and his friends had paid the supreme penalty. In reality, however, the magnates proved strong enough to force the restoration of the old order in 1790, and so matters remained, despite a variety of discussions and projects in the Transylvanian Diet[1], right down to the Revolution of 1848. During the two storm-years which seemed at one time to threaten the very existence of the Hapsburg Empire, the Roumanians of Transylvania, like those of the Bucovina, remained loyal to the Emperor and fought stubbornly against the Magyar revolutionaries. As a well-known French authority has it, "the defeat of the Magyars under Kossuth, who, in the eyes of Europe, were martyrs of liberty, was hailed by their subject races as the end of a detested tyranny[2]." The defeat, however, was not final, for by the establishment of the infamous Ausgleich of 1867, the subject races were handed back once again to the tender mercies of the descendants of Arpad. At the same time the Revolution of 1848 is of the greatest importance in the history of the Roumanian people in that it definitely led to the abolition of the wretched status of the jobbagy and laid the foundations of a strong class of peasant proprietors.

Revolution of 1848

The general principles of the peasant emancipation were the same in the lands of the Hungarian Crown as in the rest of the Hapsburg dominions. Serfdom was abolished and the peasant lands were handed over to their cultivators who became full proprietors. Most of the stipulations of the Austrian Law of September 7, 1848, were applied to the eastern portion of the monarchy by Imperial Patents in 1853 and 1854. The main difference lay in the question of compensation to the landlord. While some of the feudal privileges were abolished without any compensation at all, the abolition of most of the former obligations had to be paid for by the new peasant proprietor on the basis of a twenty-

Emancipation

[1] When at last the Diet adopted an Agrarian Law in 1847 it was so reactionary in character that the government did not dare to publish it. *Vide* Jorga, *op. cit.* II, p. 280.

[2] Auerbach, *Les Nationalités en Autriche-Hongrie*, p. 239.

years' purchase. Whereas in the Austrian lands only two-thirds of the value of these payments and services was credited to the lord, the Hungarian magnate escaped this one-third reduction. In both cases, of course, the State had to step in as intermediary between the lord and the peasant.

The results of the reform were certainly most beneficial to the Roumanian peasant though, as we shall see in the following chapter, large estates still remained an important factor in the rural economy, more especially in the western plains, which do not strictly form part of the historic principality of Transylvania. With the growth of population the land question began to come once more to the fore; though in the main the decline in the importance of the lesser Magyar gentry, who suffered most from the Reform, has operated to the advantage of the peasantry.

In summing up the Roumanian question, Professor Seton-Watson has drafted a formidable indictment against Magyar rule. "In the case of Transylvania," he says, "whatever may be disputed, one thing is indisputable—that the Roumanians have, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century, occupied the position of mere serfs, and ever since the abolition of feudalism in 1848, the position of political helots[1]." Without enlarging upon this commentary on Magyar pretensions as to the sacredness of liberty and freedom of conscience in the old Hungarian kingdom, it must, however, be added that the social emancipation of the fifties, imposed as it was from above, was inevitably destined to lead, sooner or later, to political emancipation as well; for the despised Roumanians are more numerous in Transylvania than all the other nationalities put together.

## THE BANAT

To the South of Transylvania proper lies the Banat of Timişoara, which was divided under the recent treaty settle-

[1] *Roumania and the Great War*, p. 35. It would possibly have been more correct to date the institution of serfdom from the beginning of the fourteenth century.

ment between Roumania and Jugoslavia. As agrarian conditions in this part of the former kingdom of Hungary have developed on rather special lines, a few words on the subject seem to be called for in this place.

Whatever the earlier history of the region may have been, the Banat, even in the fifteenth century, was frequently subject to attacks by the Turks, and in 1552 it was definitely incorporated in the Ottoman Empire. It was not restored to the kingdom of Hungary until the Peace of Passarowitz in 1718[1], and at that time, although naturally one of the richest parts of the Hapsburg dominions, it was for the most part a wilderness and almost completely devoid of inhabitants. After the conquest, however, large numbers of Serbs moved in from the South and West; Roumanians came from the North; and, in addition, the Imperial government induced colonies of Swabians to establish themselves in the new territories. A memorandum of 1720 stressed the desirability of this latter element, "durch Untermischung teutscher Colonieen die Revolten des Pövels leichter zu verhindern[2]." The mountain district in the East of the Banat (the modern department of Caraş-Severin) must however have been inhabited mainly by Roumanians even at the time of the Turkish occupation, and to this day it is one of the most thoroughly Roumanian districts in the whole kingdom.

The Hapsburgs themselves remained for long the landlords in the Banat, and governed the country by means of a military administration. In fact the famous military frontier stretched down Croatia and Slavonia through the Banat to the Transylvanian frontier, and in this region at any rate the new settlers were free peasantry holding their land in return for military service. The Roumanian villages were under their own hereditary magistrates, called "Chinez[3]," and the colonists shared the privileges of the Serb settlers further to

[1] When the Hapsburgs also acquired the Province of Oltenia, or Little Wallachia, as we have already seen (*vide ante*, p. 23).

[2] Kaindl, *Die Deutschen in Ost Europa*, p. 16.

[3] *Vide ante*, p. 7.

the West. The various restrictions which bore so heavily on the despised Vlachs of Transylvania proper never existed in the Banat, while the mode of settlement strengthened the hands of the peasantry from the very start, for although, and perhaps, in part, because conditions were primitive, the settlers, in true colonial fashion, endeavoured to stake their claims to as much land as possible[1].

This brief summary will probably suffice to explain the fact that, when the eastern and northern parts of the Banat were incorporated in the new Roumania, peasant proprietorship was already well established. As a result, recent agrarian legislation has had relatively little effect in this part of what is now called Transylvania.

Quite different is the position in those parts of the border counties of Hungary proper, such as Arad and Bihar, which came to Roumania in 1919, for this region—which is called the Crişiana in Roumanian—was an integral part of the old kingdom of Hungary and its agrarian development had been on truly Magyar lines.

[1] Marczali, *op. cit.* pp. 54 and 216.

## *Chapter Four*

# Agrarian Conditions on the Eve of Reform

I. The Old Kingdom
II. Bessarabia
III. The Bucovina
IV. Transylvania
V. Transport and Grain Exports
VI. The Co-operative Movement

## § I

## THE OLD KINGDOM

PRIOR to the war the division of rural property[1] in the Old Kingdom, as it resulted from the long process of historical evolution with which we have hitherto been concerned, was characterized above all by the preponderance of the large owner.

| Category | Number of proprietors | Surface (in hectares) | % of total cultivated area |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small properties (up to 25 acres) | 920,939 | 3,153,645 | 40·29 |
| Medium properties (25 to 250 acres) | 38,723 | 862,800 | 11·02 |
| Large estates (250 acres and over) | 5,385 | 3,810,351 | 48·69 |
| Total | 965,047 | 7,826,796 | 100·00 |

Nearly half the area of the country was in the hands of 5385 large owners; while over 95 per cent. of the total rural population only owned some 40 per cent. of the land between them. From the economic point of view, the small properties were too small—for well over 60 per cent. of the holdings in this category were under 12½ acres—while the large estates, of which over a quarter were over 7500 acres each, were much too large. Most unfortunate of all, from the economic no less than from the social point of view, is the fact that the holdings of medium size were so few in number as to be almost negligible.

As we have already seen, however, the agrarian development of the various parts of the Old Kingdom of Roumania had varied considerably and this fact is well brought out in the following table[2]:

[1] Exclusive of forests.

[2] These tables are based on the statistical studies of Creanga, *op. cit.* 1, pp. 89–136. His figures are frequently quoted officially, and were calculated *circa* 1906. Accordingly they do not include the results of the

Area (in hectares)

*Estates*

| | Small | Medium | | Large | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Up to 25 acres | 25–125 acres | 125–250 acres | 250–1250 acres | Over 1250 acres |
| Moldavia | 934,986 | 150,159 | 35,370 | 234,303 | 963,949 |
| Wallachia | 1,297,316 | 150,951 | 49,926 | 365,948 | 1,633,196 |
| Oltenia | 726,143 | 130,087 | 30,487 | 153,431 | 306,722 |
| Dobrogea | 195,200 | 264,756 | 51,064 | 62,703 | 90,099 |
| Total Old Kingdom | 3,153,645 | 695,953 | 166,847 | 816,385 | 2,993,966 |

These figures are not so helpful as might at first sight appear because the boundaries of the main regions of agricultural production do not coincide with those of the historical provinces nor even in every case with those of the departments. Moreover, they refer solely to the unit of property and not to the unit of agricultural production. A consideration of the estates of 250 acres and over which were leased by their owners is of interest in this latter connection. For the whole territory of the Old Kingdom the landlords themselves exploited a little over 43 per cent. of their estates. In the Provinces of Oltenia and the Dobrogea, where peasant holdings were relatively very important and where very large estates were the exception, this proportion was exceeded, whereas it was smallest of all in Wallachia. Put in another way, the proportion of estates over 250 acres which were farmed out by their owners was as follows:

| | | % |
|---|---|---|
| Wallachia | ... | 62·5 |
| Moldavia | ... | 60·4 |
| Oltenia | ... | 49·8 |
| Dobrogea | ... | 31·4 |
| Old Kingdom | ... | 56·9 |

activities of the Casa Rurala (Law of 1907); but down to 1916 this institution had only purchased 19,568 has. on behalf of the peasants.

It has been stated[1] that 26·13 per cent. of the total agricultural surface in 1915 was exploited as large farms, and that of this area 53·87 per cent. was worked directly by the owners, the remainder being leased to middlemen. Of the 73·87 per cent. worked as small farms, 66·73 per cent. was worked by the owners, 19·28 per cent. by tenant farmers and 13·99 per cent. by metayers. The position of the labourers on the latifundia and of the metayers was particularly onerous.

A clearer view of the agrarian problem in the Old Kingdom will be obtained by considering the main geographical areas of the country, and the types of agricultural production and organization which prevailed in each. The territory of the Old Kingdom comprises five fairly well defined natural regions. Along the old frontier which separated the country from Transylvania and the Banat lie the main ranges of the Carpathians and the Transylvanian Alps. This mountain region may be roughly defined as that part of the country which lies above 3000 feet. Between this area and the rivers Danube and Siret come first the hill region (between 600 and 3000 feet), and then the Danubian plains. Between the Siret and the Prut there is a region of rolling country which is intermediate in character between the hill country and the plains; while the Dobrogea forms a well-defined region of its own between the Danube and the Black Sea.

## THE MOUNTAIN ZONE

The mountain zone is essentially a region of forest, and agricultural production proper is very meagre. Such cultivated land as there is, however, is almost entirely in the hands of small and medium peasants, for in this area are to be found a considerable number of the descendants of the free peasantry—the Moşneni and Rezeşi of earlier days. The principal crop is maize which is grown in small patches[2].

[1] *Vide Admiralty Handbook of Roumania*, p. 146.

[2] A rather special system, called "moine," is frequently practised by which land is brought under the plough after being used for pasture for three successive years. Many of the maize patches at high altitudes are treated in this manner.

Hemp is grown also to some extent, but wheat is practically unknown. In the summer months shepherds from the plains bring large numbers of sheep to the high mountain lands where excellent pasture is found. The wide expanses of thick grass, called "poiana," which exist for the most part above the forest zone, and are much favoured by the heavy dews, have played a considerable rôle in the evolution of the Roumanian people. The importance of this factor, however, is even greater in the Transylvanian highlands to the West, though many Transylvanian shepherds (sometimes called "Mocani") have always been in the habit of bringing their flocks to the Old Kingdom.

## THE HILL REGION

As one descends from the mountains to the plains the small proprietor gradually gives place to the large landowner. At the same time in eight of the twelve departments which correspond more or less with what we have called the hill region, large estates form less than 40 per cent. of the total cultivated area. In the main, peasant proprietorship in the hill region is most developed in Oltenia and the adjoining parts of Wallachia; while with the exception of the department of Suceava, which adjoins the Bucovina, and which has kept a considerable proportion of small and medium owners, it is lowest in Moldavia.

Small-scale production certainly predominates throughout this region, the main crop being maize, for which the climate is particularly suitable on account of the abundance of moisture in the spring. Maize is the staple food of the peasantry, who take it in the form of a kind of hominy called "mămăliga." The preponderance of this cereal—which, we may add, was only introduced into the country towards the end of the seventeenth century—is also explained in part in that it provides an abundance of stalk for forage and is excellent both for fattening pigs and as food for poultry. Stock-raising is, of course, of greater importance in the hill

region than in the Danubian plains, and the peasantry are here practically self-supporting. Sheep are raised for their wool, which is woven at home, and also for the milk, which is made into a curious kind of cheese called "brînza." This is eaten together with "mămăliga" by nearly all Roumanian peasants.

Wheat is also cultivated in this area, but is of much less importance than maize, while barley and oats, on the other hand, are not much grown, save in Moldavia. Fruit, and especially plums, are much in evidence in the hill regions of Oltenia and Wallachia. In the latter Province the peasants make an excellent plum-brandy known as "ţuica," which is the national drink of the country, while in some districts tobacco and the vine also flourish.

The rural population of the hill region lives for the most part in straggling hamlets called "cătuni." The houses are small and are usually made of wood or earth according to the district. A pleasing feature is the verandah which is typical of the Roumanian peasant dwelling. Isolated houses are very rare, but are more common in Oltenia, where the "cătuni" are smaller than elsewhere. Large numbers of poultry are kept, though the poverty of the rural population has hitherto necessitated its being sold for the most part to the town-dwellers. Prior to the Reform, poultry entered but little into the dietary of the mass of the peasants.

## THE DANUBIAN PLAINS

Down to the thirties of last century the plains to the north of the Danube were practically uninhabited. With the advent of a firm government, however, large numbers of peasants from the hill region, where the population was densest, began to settle in the steppe-like expanses of Southern Wallachia.

The plain stretches from a point south-west of Craiova in Oltenia as far as Braila, forming a belt of country which is over 300 miles long and some 50 miles broad. Large estates formerly predominated throughout this region, and in the

Bărăgan they formed over 70 per cent. of the total cultivated area[1]. This was the highest proportion found anywhere in the country; and this district was also known for its immense estates of 12,500 acres and over. In the western portion of the plain, in Southern Oltenia, the preponderance of large estates was less marked, though medium properties were negligible throughout the region.

This part of the country provided over 55 per cent. of the wheat of the Old Kingdom, though the climate is very dry and cultivation is so dependent on a very erratic rainfall that the crops vary enormously from year to year. The average yield was thus smaller than that of the country as a whole. The extensive nature of cultivation on these large latifundia may also offer a partial explanation of this fact. Maize was cultivated mainly on the small holdings, but the yield was here well above the average for the Old Kingdom. Mulberry trees are grown to some extent in the West and other crops include flax and colza, which come chiefly from the large estates, and tobacco, which is essentially a peasant crop. Cereals other than wheat and maize were of hardly any importance in this region, though rye was grown to some extent in the Bărăgan.

The steppe district proper (*i.e.* the Burnaş and the Bărăgan) is to all intents and purposes one vast treeless plain. The lack of rainfall determined the nature of colonization in this area. Unlike the rest of the country where the "cătun" predominates, settlement here takes the form of the large village or "sat," centred round a deep well. The fact that these villages are few and far between adds to the mournful character of a region where birds are few and where the summer sun is tropical in its intensity.

> Tout se tait, l'air flamboie et brûle sans haleine,
> La terre est assoupie dans sa robe de feu.

[1] The Bărăgan is divided between the departments of Braila and Ialomiţa, where estates over 250 acres formed 75·8 per cent. and 68·9 per cent. respectively of the total area.

## § II

## BESSARABIA

It is difficult to obtain a statistical picture of land tenure in Bessarabia prior to the application of the recent reform which will be strictly comparable with that given for the other Roumanian provinces. This is due to the fact that Russian returns were based mainly upon the distinction between noble and peasant land—statistics of the latter being united for the most part under the heading of "nadyel[1]." The following table of rural property, though unsatisfactory on this account for small estates under 100 desyatines (= 270 acres), is adequate for judging the importance of the large owners[2].

| Category | No. of estates | Area (hectares) | % of total area |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Small estates:* | | | |
| Private property | 19,924 | 184,948 | 4·5 |
| Institutions | 527 | 193,409 | 4·7 |
| Nadyel | 12,209 | 2,111,941 | 51·1 |
| Total | 32,660 | 2,490,298 | 60·3 |
| *Large estates:* | | | |
| 270 to 1350 acres | 1,026 | 276,572 | 6·7 |
| 1350 „ 5400 „ | 608 | 630,658 | 15·3 |
| Over 5400 acres | 107 | 420,264 | 10·2 |
| Total | 1,741 | 1,327,494 | 32·2 |
| State and Church lands | 430 | 311,797 | 7·5 |
| Total | 34,831 | 4,129,589 | 100·0 |

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 62.

[2] This table is extracted from returns compiled by the Chief of the Roumanian Statistical Service in Bessarabia, M. E. Giurgea, and relates to the position immediately prior to the application of the Law of 1918. *Vide Buletinul Statistic al României*, 1920, No. 3, pp. 155–69.

Large estates predominated in the North and to a less extent in the centre, while in the principal colonization zone in the South they did not represent one-fifth of the total area. As the lands of the German and other settlers were technically known as "nadyel," these statistical returns do not bring out the predominance of medium holdings in the southern steppes. The number of peasant families working on the "nadyel," which they owned in common, was over 412,000 in the whole Province, the amount of land available for each family being particularly small amongst the Ruthene peasants on the northern frontier, where the average was under 7 acres to a family.

Bessarabia was one of the richest of the Russian governments[1]. Although maize was the principal crop, wheat came a very close second. Barley was also grown on a large scale and the total arable represented a little over 60 per cent. of the agricultural land in the Province. The yield, however, was lower than in any other part of the New Roumania. Thus wheat gave only 12 bushels per acre, as against over 19 bushels in the Old Kingdom. In the case of maize, however, the discrepancy was less marked, with 17 bushels as against about 20 bushels an acre respectively. This unsatisfactory state of affairs is explainable in part by reason of the very backward state of the Ruthene peasantry in the North, where the primitive wooden plough and flail have survived down to the present day; and in part by the relative shortage of domestic animals. At the close of the nineteenth century Bessarabia was second in the list of Russian governments with the highest proportion of "horseless" peasants; and although, thanks to the Bugeac steppes, where breeding is very important, the contingent of horses was relatively higher than in the other Roumanian lands, the proportion of cattle, which provide the principal locomotive power of the peasantry, was the lowest of all.

[1] For the average annual production of the Province in the last five years before the war, *vide* "Statistical Appendix."

The standard of cultivation was highest in the German and Bulgarian colonies in the South. Wheat was here the most important crop, with barley second. The farms, for the most part some 100 to 150 acres in size, were well ordered and managed. Ploughing was done almost exclusively by horses, while agricultural implements were of a modern type and the use of machinery quite common. These steppe lands, moreover, were excellent for stock-raising and the animals were of good race. This was particularly true of the horses, which were exported to the Old Kingdom and elsewhere.

In the rest of the Province the Crown domains and Church lands were fairly well managed as a general rule; while the activities of the "zemstvo" in each locality were being directed with some slight measure of success to improving the methods of cultivation among the peasantry. The rotations however remained exceedingly primitive and the use of artificial manures was even more restricted than in the other Roumanian lands. Villages were large and far apart from one another, while communications were exceedingly bad, crude tracks taking almost everywhere the place of roads. As a result, much time was wasted by the peasant, whose plots were frequently several miles from his home. The rapid increase in the population of recent years provided an abundance of labour, but emigration does not seem to have taken place to any appreciable extent. Indeed, the movement was rather in the other direction, for numbers of Little Russians were in the habit of coming into the country during the summer months despite the fact that wages were on the whole lower here than in the Ukraine. The immigrants must in consequence have been very low-grade workers.

## § III

## THE BUCOVINA

THE Austrian statistics of ownership for 1902[1], which are the latest available, include forest, water and urban land—which do not come within the scope of agrarian reform. After making allowances for these, we arrive at the following approximate table of the ownership of arable, pasture, meadow, garden and mountain grazing land in the Province:

| Category (acres) | Area (hectares) | % of total area |
|---|---|---|
| 0–25 | 264,673 | 48 |
| 25–250 | 152,094 | 27 |
| Over 250 | 140,560 | 25 |
| | 557,327 | 100 |

Right down to our own time the Bucovina has maintained its forests, which are by far the greatest single element of its wealth[2]. Arable represented about 54 per cent. of the total agricultural area in 1902, and though the proportion increased somewhat during the early years of this century, this took place at the expense of meadow and pasture. Whereas in the Old Kingdom and in Bessarabia the cultivation of the five principal cereals—wheat, maize, barley, oats and rye—occupied over 95 per cent. of the arable land, the proportion in the Bucovina was only about two-thirds. Maize was the principal crop, with oats second and potatoes next. Clover was also an important element in the economy of the country, though the contingent of live-stock per head of the population compared on the whole unfavourably with that of the other Roumanian lands.

Despite the fact that the mountain region is only very

[1] These returns were kindly furnished me by the Roumanian authorities in the Province.

[2] The name "Bucovina" is an elegant corruption of the German "Buchenwald." In reality, however, the beech is not so predominant as the fir and the oak.

sparsely populated, population is denser in the Bucovina as a whole than in any other part of Roumania. This is explained by the fact that the population of the fertile valleys of the Siret, the Prut and the lower Bistriţa has increased by leaps and bounds and often exceeds 300 to the square mile. The lowland area in fact contains almost all the agricultural land of the Province, and of this, as we have seen, nearly one-half was in the hands of the peasants. The average holding was however very small and the owners were largely in the hands of Jewish money-lenders. This latter class too had succeeded in obtaining possession of many of the estates of the old nobility. Medium holdings were a more important feature in the Bucovina than in the Old Kingdom[1], and were partly the result of colonization by Germans and others.

Settlement here was for the most part of the "cătun" type among the Roumanians, while larger villages were found chiefly among the Ruthenes in the North. We have already seen that numbers of Bucovinans found harvest work in Moldavia. In addition, however, there appears to have been each year a small but not unimportant stream of emigrants from the Province.

Thanks to the fertility of the soil, to the importance of medium-sized properties, to the better rotation of crops, and, finally, to the activities of the "Landeskulturverein" and the model farms of the "Religious Trust," the yield per acre was on the whole higher in the Bucovina than in any other part of what is now Greater Roumania. Even maize, the peasant crop *par excellence*, was slightly better than the average yield for the Old Kingdom. Wheat, which, it should be remembered, was not cultivated to any great extent, averaged about 20 bushels per acre, while oats gave some 32 bushels per acre as against the very low average of about 22 bushels in the Old Kingdom.

[1] In an endeavour to maintain this category of property in the Austrian Empire a Law was passed in 1903 forbidding their sale under certain conditions.

From the agricultural point of view, the Bucovina produced about enough food for home consumption, though it should be remembered that the standard of living among the peasantry was very low. The principal article of export was, of course, timber, which was of quite good quality. The forests were owned chiefly by the "Religious Trust" and by the large landlords, and were on the whole quite scientifically exploited.

## § IV

## TRANSYLVANIA

Of the area of the new Roumanian Province of Transylvania over 40 per cent. is forest. When this has been deducted from the returns of the survey of ownership of rural property made by the Hungarian authorities in 1910, we arrive at the following approximate picture of the division of agricultural land in that year[1].

| Category (acres) | Area (hectares) | % of total area |
|---|---|---|
| Under 28 | 2,569,814 | 43·6 |
| 28–140 | 1,782,796 | 30·2 |
| Over 140 | 1,540,489 | 26·2 |
| Total | 5,893,099 | 100·0 |

Of the total agricultural land only a little more than half (about 51 per cent.) was arable. As in almost all other Roumanian territories, maize and wheat were the principal crops, the former predominating slightly. Next in importance came oats; while the five principal cereals together accounted for over 83 per cent. of the total arable.

The modern Province of Transylvania falls into three

[1] The categories of property here distinguished are those under 20 cadastral holds; those between 20 and 100 holds; and those over 100 holds. (The cadastral hold is an Hungarian unity equal to about 1·4 acres.)

fairly well defined natural regions, as we have already seen[1]. These are almost identical in character with the corresponding regions of the Old Kingdom.

In the mountain zone, which is represented above all in Transylvania proper and in the Eastern Banat, forests and mountain pasture (poiana) predominate. The village settlements usually consist of one street running for some distance along the valley bottom, and the inhabitants are mainly shepherds and herdsmen, some of whom migrate with their flocks to the Old Kingdom. The chief crop is maize which is cultivated in small patches to provide the inevitable "mămăliga."

The hill region includes by far the greater part of Transylvania proper, of the Eastern Banat and of the Maramureș territory in the North. The arable is here more important than in the mountain zone, though the yield of the principal crops is well below the general average for the former Kingdom of Hungary. Peasant proprietorship predominated in this area and the typical settlement is the Roumanian "cătun." In the Szekler country, on the other hand, where large peasant holdings have been the rule for centuries in the small basins surrounded by mountains in this Eastern March, the large village still remains as a reminiscence of the time when settlements were established with a view to defence.

In the hill region, however, stock-raising is on the whole more important than agriculture proper. While cattle are far and away more important than horses, pigs and above all sheep are most typical of this area. The population was quite dense in comparison with the means of subsistence and a certain amount of emigration took place, though many of the emigrants went to Old Roumania and returned again in course of time. From the cereal point of view Transylvania proper consumed more than it produced—a fact due almost entirely to the predominance of the hill region and of forest and pasture lands.

[1] *Vide* "Geographical Introduction."

In the Transylvanian Basin and the Western Plains, on the other hand, cereals predominated, and the latter region, with which the Western Banat can conveniently be included, was one of the granaries of Europe. The basin, or "Campia" as it is called, accounted for most of the wheat grown in Transylvania proper, though the highest yields were obtained in the Saxon settlements near Braşov. These colonies, together with numerous settlements of Swabians in the Banat, were largely responsible for the importance of medium properties which, as we have seen, formed over 30 per cent. of the total agricultural area of the new Province. The Roumanian peasants in this neighbourhood, almost alone among those of their race, had given up the national dish of "mămăliga" and had taken to wheaten bread. Horses were here very important and conditions of cultivation in general were relatively advanced, maize being much the most important crop. It must be remembered, however, that the most fertile corn lands of the Banat were handed to Serbia at the Peace Conference.

In the Crişiana district, which geographically forms part of the Hungarian plain, large estates were more important, while cereals, and more especially wheat, predominated. The technique of production was here for the most part in advance of that in vogue in the Old Kingdom.

The density of population in the new Transylvania as a whole is small; but if allowance is made for the vast area under forest, it will be seen that the pressure of population on the agricultural area proper is considerable. This factor made the agrarian problem much more acute than might at first sight have appeared.

## § V

## TRANSPORT AND GRAIN EXPORTS

Old Kingdom

THE transport situation of the Old Kingdom was a very simple one. The hill and mountain district, where transport on a large scale would have been difficult, was practically self-sufficing. Its surplus production consisted chiefly of timber[1] (which was floated down one or other of the numerous tributaries of the Danube), poultry, fruit, live-stock and ţuica. For these latter, peasant transport was used as a general rule; and the roads of the country were among the best in Eastern Europe and adequate for the purpose. Long strings of peasant carts drawn by oxen were, and still are, a prominent feature in the Roumanian landscape. A few railway lines running from the mountains down to the main East-West trunk line were ample to co-ordinate the transport system of this part of the country.

The great corn-growing areas, as we have seen, were to be found in relatively close proximity to the Danube, the Siret or the Prut. The large estates of the Southern Steppe regions often sent their exports to one or other of the Danube ports such as Calafat, Turnu Magurele or Giurgiu, whence they went by barge either inland, *via* the Iron Gates, to the Austrian and German markets; or else down stream to Braila or Galatz, where they were transhipped into ocean-going vessels which left *via* the Sulina arm of the Danube delta for the Black Sea. The other principal outlet was by one or other of the branch lines which run North to join the main Roumanian trunk line, and so by rail either to Galatz and Braila, or else across the great Cernavoda bridge to Constanţa, the best equipped and most modern port of the country.

River transport was less important for the Moldavian exporters as the Siret is not navigable and the Prut, which formerly formed the frontier between Roumania and Russia,

[1] Oil and salt, for both of which special transport arrangements were made, are not included in the scope of this section.

was largely ruled out for political reasons. The main railway lines here run from North to South with Galatz, the only Moldavian river port of any importance, as the outlet. As in most parts of the country, however, the railways were only single tracks, and proved more inadequate each year to cope with the rapidly-increasing volume of exports.

Bessarabia

Transport conditions in Bessarabia under the Russian regime were exceedingly backward. Grain exports from the North either went by one of the two railway lines eastwards across the Nistru to join the main line from Kamenets Podolsk to Odessa, or were sent in small barges down the Nistru itself. Navigation on this river (which now forms the frontier) was, however, in such a bad state, particularly in the lower reaches, that the barges usually discharged at Tighina, the grain being sent on to Odessa by rail. Exports from the Bugeac steppes were taken by cart, or, in one or two districts, by rail to Cetatea Alba or to Ismail, where they were shipped coastwise to Odessa. Finally, grain from the western part of the Province was loaded into barges at Leova and one or two other river villages and sent down the Prut to Galatz. An alternative was for it to go by cart or rail to Reni, on the Danube, where it was shipped direct into ocean-going vessels. In this latter case, however, there were absolutely no harbour facilities and the cargoes were handled in a most primitive fashion. It is interesting to note that the Prut traffic was mainly in the hands of Greeks and Jews—a sure sign that it was a sound business proposition! Indeed, the river is navigable for large barges up to Ungheni, a distance of over 250 miles, and, but for the political motives which led the Russian government to favour Odessa at the expense of the Roumanian ports, Galatz would certainly have been almost the only outlet for Bessarabian grain.

Transylvania

Transylvania proper imported cereals from the Hungarian plain, while both here and in the Banat the railways formed an integral part of the Hungarian system and converged on Budapest. This was, of course, part of a deliberate policy

and by no means entirely corresponded with the economic needs of the country nor even with its geographical structure. It is in many ways surprising that more use was not made of the Danube as a highway for corn exports from the Banat, though Orşova was a port of some small importance, as also was the Roumanian town of Turnu Severin, at the other end of the Iron Gates defile. The railways in the new Province of Transylvania were nevertheless more numerous than in any other portion of Greater Roumania; though this is partially accounted for by the fact that the possibilities of water transport are here very limited. We may note in passing that the division of the Banat between Roumania and Jugoslavia has greatly complicated the transport problems of this part of Roumania.

Bucovina

Transport in the Bucovina was concerned mainly with timber and with through transit from Poland and to some extent, also, from Germany to the Black Sea and the Levant. It need not therefore detain us at present, though a scheme for canalizing the Bucovinan section of the Prut, which had been adopted but not carried out by the former Austrian government, might, if it materialized, be of some importance in facilitating grain exports from the Province and from the North-West corner of Bessarabia.

Cereal Exports

It is unfortunately not possible to give a statistical survey of cereal exports from all the Roumanian Provinces in pre-war days, as separate returns were not kept. One is perhaps justified in assuming that Transylvania, Crişiana and the Roumanian Banat were, between them, not much more than self-sufficing from the cereal point of view under the old regime; and the same is probably true of the Bucovina also. In none of these lands, save only in a portion of the Banat and in the Crişina, do cereals predominate, and it is most unlikely that they will ever play an important rôle in the grain export trade. In the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia, on the other hand, cereals are of the very greatest importance. As the export figures for Bessarabia were included in those

for the Russian Empire it is only possible roughly to estimate the exportable surplus in pre-war days. In the following table the average annual production in the Old Kingdom during the five-year period 1909 to 1913 is given side by side with the export figures for the same period.

OLD KINGDOM
(In metric tons)

| Cereal | Production | Net exports | Domestic consumption |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 2,389,323 | 1,365,812 | 1,023,511 |
| Maize | 2,730,281 | 983,704 | 1,746,577 |
| Barley | 544,053 | 350,834 | 193,219 |
| Oats | 421,617 | 155,926 | 265,691 |
| Rye | 118,844 | 89,393 | 29,451 |

Conditions in Bessarabia were very similar to those in the Old Kingdom, and if we assume that the consumption of cereals per head was also on the whole much the same, it is possible to arrive at some estimate of the cereal surplus of the Province in pre-war days[1].

BESSARABIA
(In metric tons)

| Cereal | Production | Estimated surplus |
|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 658,890 | 320,000 |
| Maize | 860,278 | 250,000 |
| Barley | 623,954 | 500,000 |
| Rye | 193,913 | 50,000 |

It must, of course, be admitted that this table gives a better view of the probable position of cereal exports as a whole than of the relative position of the different cereals. It seems fairly certain, however, that the Province exported on an average well over a million tons of grain annually, barley

[1] Average for 1909–13.

occupying the premier position, with wheat and maize next in importance.

If, therefore, we regard the former Austrian and Hungarian Provinces as merely self-sufficing from the cereal point of view, the average annual net exports of the territories now comprised in Greater Roumania during the five-year period 1909–13 must have been about 1·7 million metric tons of wheat; some $1\frac{1}{4}$ million tons of maize; and over 850,000 tons of barley. The other cereals were relatively unimportant, as we have seen.

Live-Stock

The exports of live-stock from the Old Kingdom were very small and, indeed, with the exception of oxen, absolutely negligible. Bessarabia, on the other hand, exported a certain number of horses—many of which came to the Old Kingdom for the Roumanian cavalry—while Transylvania was a great stock-raising country. Unfortunately, however, it is impossible to make even a rough estimate of the importance of this surplus in the agricultural economy of the Roumanian lands in pre-war days.

## § VI

## THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

No survey of agrarian conditions prior to the Reform would be complete without some reference, however summary, to rural co-operation.

Bessarabia was certainly the most backward of all the Provinces in this respect, for even mutual credit associations, despite the fact that they were encouraged by the Russian government, were quite insignificant. The Peasants' Land Bank, however, which was a State institution, had helped considerably in the purchase of "nadyel" by the peasantry, but in general it is true the rural population was in a very backward state indeed in this as in most other respects.

In the Bucovina, despite the low standard of living, Co-

operation had begun to make itself felt in the years immediately preceding the war. Mutual credit associations developed along national lines, though their activities seem to have tended more towards providing commercial and industrial than rural credit. In the country districts they had certainly not succeeded in ousting the Jews from their natural preserves.

In Transylvania, Raiffeisen societies performed yeoman service in the cause of Roumanian nationalism. Both here and in the Banat the despised Vlachs had come to realize the advantages to be gained by banding themselves together in the economic sphere; though the sturdy independence of the Szekler yeomanry did not prevent them either from appreciating the fact that mutual aid is the best form of self-help for the small farmer.

In Roumania proper the co-operative movement was to all intents and purposes the creation of the government. The soil, however, was congenial, above all, perhaps among the peasants of the hill region, where the yeomen had long been in the habit of helping one another in ploughing and harvesting. In Oltenia, especially, the custom of "Munca pe ajutat"—or mutual aid work—had come down from time immemorial; though this is, of course, not rural co-operation in the technical sense of the term.

As is well known, rural co-operation developed enormously in Southern Germany in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, and it is therefore not surprising that the first Roumanian co-operative society should have been founded (in 1891) on German lines. The Schulze-Delitzsch organization was the most common, though a few Raiffeisen societies were to be found in the Dobrogea and elsewhere. Rural credit institutions sprang up in each village where twenty-five members were forthcoming, and by 1913 these societies already numbered 2901, with a total membership of 584,632. In each district a "Federala" was formed, to which the government contributed 50 per cent. of the capital, and the movement was further co-ordinated by the creation of a "Casa Centrala"

under similar conditions at Bucarest. Production societies, however, were only in their infancy, and the peasant had not learned that the co-operative sale of wheat and other commodities would pay him much better than the system by which he sold his produce to the landlord or the Jewish or Greek middleman at prices well below their real value. An interesting type of society was that formed to rent land in common (the so-called "obşte"), which was instituted, as we have seen, after the Peasant Rising of 1907[1].

Although Roumania before the war was still far behind countries like Denmark in its co-operative organization, the foundations had been well laid, and the rural population were rapidly accustoming themselves to the principle of mutual aid.

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 46.

## *Chapter Five*

# The New Agrarian Laws and their Application

I. The Origin of the New Legislation
II. An Outline of the Principal Enactments
III. The Expropriation Clauses
IV. The Machinery of Expropriation
V. Compensation
VI. The New Peasant Proprietors
VII. Land Ownership after the Reform
VIII. Forests and the Subsoil

## § I

# THE ORIGIN OF THE NEW AGRARIAN LEGISLATION

THE Agrarian question was very much to the fore on the eve of the World War. The activities of the "Casa Rurala" (Land Bank), which had been created after the peasant risings of 1907[1], had proved most disappointing, for less than 50,000 acres had been distributed to the peasantry through its activity prior to Roumania's entry into the war. Indeed it was slowly becoming apparent that recourse would have to be had to very drastic measures before the land-hunger of the rural population could be satisfied, and as early as 1913 the Liberal Party declared its adherence to the principle of the expropriation of the large landlords to this end.

The outbreak of hostilities in 1914, however, forced the question for the time being into the background, for public attention was naturally directed to the vast political issues that were raised in connection with Roumanian neutrality and the possibilities of armed intervention in the cause of national unity. Two years later Roumania declared war on the Central Powers and the prosecution of hostilities absorbed the whole energy of the country. The Roumanian peasant fought admirably, but the lack of co-ordination on the Eastern front led to a chronic shortage of munitions and the country was soon overrun by German armies advancing from the South, in co-operation with the Bulgarians and Turks, and from the West in common with the Austro-Hungarian forces. In the summer of 1917 the Roumanian army was defending the line of the Siret, while Moldavia was full of refugees and especially of Russian troops whose *moral* had been seriously undermined by the overthrow of the Tsarist regime earlier in the year. With the advent of the Russian Revolution, indeed, a new element entered into the political and social

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 46.

life of the whole of Eastern Europe. The position of the Roumanians was quite untenable from a military point of view, and after a victory over the Central Allies at Maraşeşti in August, which saved the national honour but which was powerless to alter the general situation, armistice terms were negotiated which led ultimately to the infamous Peace of Bucarest in the following year.

Meanwhile, however, the Russian troops in Moldavia, approximately a million in number, were already infected with the insidious doctrines of the new Communism and soon got completely out of hand. The Bolshevist propagandists, moreover, were actively endeavouring to persuade the Roumanian rank and file to combine with them in overthrowing the social order and thus put an end once and for all to the "tyranny of the boyars." On the other side of the border the Ukrainian peasantry had already begun to enter into possession of the lands of their former lords without waiting for legislative sanction, and the whole concept of property was shaken to its very foundations. It might appear strange at first sight that the temptation to go and do likewise did not prove irresistible to the Roumanian peasant soldiers; and yet in fact not only were the Russians expelled from Moldavia, though not without considerable loss of life, but the Roumanian armies—composed to an overwhelming extent of the rural element—advanced into Bessarabia, which had been seized by the Muscovite in 1812, and re-established Roumanian influence in that Province. Moreover, the Old Kingdom passed through the trials of defeat and of a hostile occupation without any social upheaval of any kind. The explanation of this apparently strange phenomenon is of vital import for our present purpose and demands some elucidation.

The principal reason is probably to be sought in the natural good sense of the Roumanian peasant himself, which has frequently been commented upon by observant travellers. Bolshevist promises seemed both too good and too interested

to be genuine, and the country folk no less than the town dwellers were determined to be rid of the wandering bands of Russian soldiery which preyed upon them.

Another reason, however, is that the governing classes of the country quickly profited from the lessons of adversity. Influenced in part no doubt by fear, and perhaps in even greater measure by the consideration that if they attempted to keep everything they would quite possibly succeed in keeping nothing, the landed classes resolved voluntarily to make the sacrifices that had for many years already been demanded of them by all the most enlightened elements in the country. Accordingly, the Parliament, which sat at Jassy during the German occupation of Bucarest, convoked a Constituent Assembly and this body in June, 1917—that is to say in the middle of hostilities and within only a few miles of the actual field of battle—amended Article 19 of the Constitution which regulated the position of private property in the country. The right to expropriate for reasons of public utility existed already. The Constitutional Amendment of Jassy, as it is called, extended this principle to expropriation for reasons of *national* utility. In order to establish peasant ownership, it was decreed that all inalienable lands, and all lands belonging to foreigners, absenteeists, corporations and institutions, the Crown and the "Casa Rurala" should be completely expropriated; while, most important of all, the private owners were to be called upon to furnish between them two million hectares (nearly five million acres) of cultivable land as well. The dispossessed proprietors were of course to be compensated adequately for their losses[1]. Although the continued occupation of the greater part of the country by enemy forces made it impossible for this programme to be applied forthwith, there can be no doubt that the *geste* did much to strengthen the position of the govern-

[1] Old Constitution: Article 19, sec. v amended. On the battlefield of Maraşeşti the King, in a Proclamation to the soldiers, promised that the Crown domains should be divided amongst the peasant soldiers.

ment, and the definite promise of a better future which it implied was certainly largely instrumental in winning the willing co-operation of the peasantry through a period of trial and privation which is probably without precedent even in the darkest pages of Roumanian history.

Side by side with this development in the Old Kingdom events were moving still more rapidly in the former Russian Province of Bessarabia. The advent of the Bolsheviks put an end for the moment to all possibility of the formation of a Federal Monarchy in place of the old Tsarist Empire, and the "Sfatul Ţarii," or Provincial Assembly, of Bessarabia declared the severance of all ties between itself and the Ukrainian Rada. The new country was given the title of the "Moldavian Republic of Bessarabia," and the principle of the expropriation of the large owners in the interests of peasant proprietorship was proclaimed as one of the fundamentals of its constitution. One of the last acts of the "Sfatul Ţarii" prior to its final declaration of reunion with Roumania, was a very far-reaching and revolutionary agrarian law which was passed on November 27, 1918. At first it had been intended that the large latifundia should be expropriated completely and without compensation; but, under pressure from the Roumanian government, this law allowed for the retention of 100 has. (250 acres) by each proprietor and even promised compensation for the land actually expropriated. The proximity of revolutionary Russia, no less than the shortage of land in many parts of the Province, accounted for the severity of this Bessarabian law as compared with agrarian legislation in the rest of Roumania.

Before the close of the year 1918 the collapse of the Central Powers led to the completion of national unity, and the importance of the agrarian question in all the Roumanian lands is emphasized by the terms under which this reunion was effected. The National Assembly of the Roumanians of Transylvania, the Banat, Crişiana and Maramureş, for example, which met at Alba Julia on November 18, made the incor-

poration of these lands in Greater Roumania conditional upon the introduction of universal suffrage and of agrarian reform. In a similar manner the National Council of the Bucovina adopted the principle of agrarian reform prior to its vote of reunion with the mother country. It was therefore apparent from the beginning that the final solution of this question and the creation of a strong class of peasant proprietors must of necessity be one of the very first tasks of the new government of Greater Roumania.

## § II

## AN OUTLINE OF THE PRINCIPAL ENACTMENTS

Decree of December 15, 1918

THE positive programme of agrarian reform was drawn up, rather hastily it is true, in the full flush of victory, while the organization of the country was still suffering acutely from the consequences of enemy occupation. From the purely technical point of view the moment was by no means opportune. From the social and political points of view, however, delay would have been dangerous, if not disastrous.

> Now that complete victory has crowned the efforts of our people and of our Allies; that the union of all Roumanians from the Nistru to the Tisa is an accomplished fact; and that the foundations of an integral Roumania are being laid, the great agrarian reforms voted by the Constituent Assembly of the Old Kingdom and by the "Sfatul Ţarii" of Bessarabia, must be realized without any delay.
>
> It is only thus that justice, which has been promised to the peasantry and which is their due, can be rendered them.
>
> It is only thus that National Unity, broad based on a people strengthened and satisfied with its lot, can make its salutary effects felt to the full.

In these words the Prime Minister, Mr Ion Brătianu, addressed a report to the King, which led, on December 15,

1918, to the promulgation of a Decree carrying into effect the principles adopted by the Constituent Assembly at Jassy in the previous year. Six days later another Decree confirmed and brought into force the Law passed by the "Sfatul Ţarii" in November; and the work of expropriation commenced almost immediately in the Old Kingdom and in Bessarabia.

It may seem surprising that enactments of this magnitude should have been promulgated by royal decree, even though the legality of the procedure was realized to depend upon their ultimate ratification by the Legislature. The reason, of course, was that elections had not been held and that the Parliament was not sitting at the time; but solemn pledges had been given, the fulfilment of which was a matter of urgency in the interests of law and order.

As we shall be concerned in later sections with the details of these enactments, it will suffice here briefly to outline the later evolution of the agrarian laws.

Bessarabia

In the case of Bessarabia, the original decree had carried expropriation to its fullest limits, but the lack of adequate statistical preparation had led to more land being designated for peasant ownership than was in fact available for the purpose. Accordingly the codifying law, which was passed by Parliament and finally received the royal assent on March 11, 1920, modified several of the provisions of the original law.

Agrarian Law of July 17, 1921

In the Old Kingdom the application of the terms of the royal decree of December 15, 1918, did not succeed in providing the lands envisaged in the Constitutional Amendment of Jassy. For this reason the law which was passed by Parliament and finally promulgated on July 17, 1921, not only confirmed the earlier decree but established a new scale which limited still further the lands left in the hands of the former owners.

Transylvania and the Bucovina

The progress of events was less rapid in Transylvania and the Bucovina. The need for action was here felt to be less urgent—partly, no doubt, because there were very few lati-

fundia, while the danger of Russian propaganda was somewhat less. Moreover the change from the old regime to the new raised many administrative difficulties which required time for their adequate solution. Late in 1919, and again in 1920, decrees were promulgated which prepared the way for agrarian reform in Transylvania; but the work of expropriation did not really proceed apace until the promulgation of the codifying law on July 23, 1921. A similar Act relating to the Bucovina received the royal assent on the same day.

## § III

## THE EXPROPRIATION CLAUSES

In considering the various laws and decrees which between them regulate the application of agrarian reform in the modern Kingdom of Roumania, local variations in the different provinces combine with the fact that the later legislation was more drastic than the earlier to make a mere series of summaries of the enactments themselves almost worthless. For our present purpose, therefore, we shall consider separately the position of the dispossessed landlords; of the new peasant proprietors; and of the State, as affected by all these laws together. As the first problem was to provide land for the peasantry we naturally begin with the question of expropriation.

### THE OLD KINGDOM

In accordance with the Constitutional Amendment of Jassy, the Decree of December 15, 1918, declared that all cultivable lands belonging to the Crown, the "Casa Rurala" and all public bodies and legal persons whatsoever were to be expropriated in their integrity. In addition, a similar fate was decreed for the whole extent of such rural properties as belonged to subjects of foreign states and to absentee land-

lords[1]. These clauses were maintained and extended by the Law of July 17, 1921. All landlords who had farmed out their land continuously from April, 1910, to April, 1920, were henceforth considered as absenteeists, though an exception was made in the case of land exploited on behalf of minors. Under this Act, however, the country houses, forests, vineyards and mills owned by foreigners or absenteeists might be exempted from expropriation at the request of the former owners and with the approval of the authorities, provided they were not necessary for attaining the objects aimed at by the law. In this case, however, the proprietor was under an obligation to sell such property within three years.

The final result of the application of this part of the Reform Laws in the Old Kingdom is given in the following table:

EXPROPRIATIONS[2]

| Category | Number of properties | Area (hectares) |
|---|---|---|
| Crown domains and public bodies | 664 | 413,724 |
| Foreigners | 62 | 102,431 |
| Absenteeists | 25 | 41,601 |
| State lands | 282 | 160,446 |
| Total | 1,033 | 718,202 |

In other words, these categories alone provided over one and three-quarter million acres of land for distribution to the peasantry.

The Jassy Amendment had stipulated that the private owners were to provide between them two million hectares of cul-

[1] Absenteeists were those, who, for the preceding five years, had been subject to a special double land tax, in accordance with earlier fiscal legislation.

[2] This table, which relates to the position on December 31, 1922, was communicated by the Roumanian Statistical Service through the kind intermediary of Colonel Rosetti.

tivable land for the new peasant proprietors. This total was to be reckoned in addition to the land expropriated from the various categories of owners which we have already considered[1]. The Decree of December 15, 1918, defined cultivable land as being all land which had been used up to that time as arable, meadow or pasture, together with any other lands which might be cultivated profitably[2]. In order to provide the necessary total, a scale of expropriation was drawn up, the tenor of which will be apparent from the following summary.

| | Has. | | Has. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Owners of a property of | 100 | kept | 100·0 |
| " " " | 200 | " | 165·7 |
| " " " | 500 | " | 241·2 |
| " " " | 1,000 | " | 284·9 |
| " " " | 2,000 | " | 324·6 |
| " " " | 5,000 | " | 396·9 |
| " " " | 10,000 and over | " | 500·0 |

Several properties owned by a single proprietor in the same commune, even though they were quite distinct from one another, were treated as forming one property for the purposes of this scale, and the same was true of properties belonging to the same person in adjoining communes, if they were exploited as a single estate. The owners of several properties in different parts of the country, however, were to be treated as different persons, unless the requisite area was not forthcoming as a result of the application of the schedule. If, in spite of this provision, the expropriations still fell short of the stipulated two million hectares, then the quota kept by each landlord who came within the scope of this measure was to be reduced proportionately.

These provisions bear obvious signs of having been drawn

[1] Save only of the absenteeists, whose total was to be included in the two million has. (Decree: Arts. 9 and 15.)

[2] The Law of July 17, 1921, made it quite clear that vineyards, orchards, plantations (laid down by January 1, 1917), lands artificially irrigated, forests, watercourses and waste lands were not liable to expropriation. (Art. 13.)

up in haste and promulgated in ignorance of the needs of the country. Really adequate statistical data were lacking and there was no time for the necessary preliminary studies. This alone explains the fact that no distinction was made between the different parts of the country, with the result that this scale, which proved hopelessly inadequate in the hill region, was about sufficient in the Bărăgan. Moreover the scale as such failed to provide the necessary two million hectares, and a *pro rata* extension of the quota to be furnished by each individual landowner would have ignored the distribution of population as between the different parts of the country. At the same time, the Decree provided a rough approximation to the needs of the moment, since large estates predominated on the whole in the least populated parts of the country, as we have already seen. From the economic point of view, however, it would have been most desirable to discriminate between the expropriation of land owned by proprietors who worked it themselves and those who worked it with the peasantry on a produce-sharing or similar basis, and this, of course, was not done.

Despite their rather obvious defects these stipulations of the December decree did lead within a year or so to the expropriation of nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ million hectares, or over $3\frac{1}{2}$ million acres [1]. The discrepancy between this total and that promised at Jassy was the source of much disappointment, and it soon became clear that the problem would have to be tackled afresh, with due regard to the lessons of experience. This was the object of the Law of July 17, 1921.

After providing legislative sanction for the earlier expropriations, this Law (Articles 8–10) laid down a new scale. A distinction was made between owners who leased their land; owners who cultivated their own estates; and those who not only cultivated themselves, but had also made certain improvements and constructed buildings, just prior to

[1] The final total after all necessary adjustments had been made was 1,496,539 hectares, taken from 3718 estates. (Situation on December 31, 1922.)

the passing of the Act. The quotas assigned to these different categories varied according to the district in which the properties were situated. They were lowest in the hill region; greater in those districts of the plain where there was not enough land available already to provide the demobilized soldiers and war widows with 5 has. (12 acres) each; greater still where the needs of the demobilized men had been satisfied, but where there was not enough to settle the other categories of peasants entitled to claim land under the Act; and greatest of all where the application of previous enactments had already provided the necessary land for all categories of peasant holdings. Proprietors who owned more than one estate in different parts of the country were allowed to retain more land than their less fortunate fellows, all of whose belongings were situated in the same or adjoining communes. The following table gives the area which might be kept by proprietors under these different circumstances:

(Hectares)

| | Hill | Plain | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Demand great | Demand less | Demand satisfied |
| Owner cultivators | 100 | 150 | 200 | 250 |
| Owners with improvements, etc. | 100 | 200 | 300 | 500 |
| Owners with more than one estate | 200 | 250 | 400 | 500 |

Owners who did not cultivate themselves were allowed to retain 100 has. if they owned one estate; and 200 has. if they owned more than one estate.

It will be seen that in consequence of this Law, no owner, other than a foreigner or an absenteeist, is left with less than 100 has., nor with more than 500 has. Within these limits, however, the scale of expropriations, though much more drastic, is also much more scientific than the earlier sliding scale. All land in excess of the quotas left to the former

owners is of course available for distribution to the peasantry. It is worth noting, however, that expropriations made by this Law over and above those effected by the December decree, do not become operative immediately save in those districts where the land can at once be handed over for peasant exploitation. Moreover, the dispossessed landlord can choose within certain limits which land he desires to keep, and his quota is to be formed into a single estate. Finally any landlord who voluntarily surrenders his quota in the hill region is entitled to an estate half as large again in a colonization zone.

The application of these stipulations of the Agrarian Law of 1921 has already led[1] to the expropriation of a further 304,443 hectares (or approximately three-quarters of a million acres) over and above the area expropriated in virtue of the earlier sliding scale; and it is estimated that a further 200,000 has. will pass into peasant hands as a result of the expropriations which are now in course of execution.

The net result of this legislation is that over two and a half million hectares of cultivable land have already been expropriated in the Old Kingdom of Roumania. This total is made up as follows:

| | | Has. |
|---|---|---|
| Decree of December 15, 1918 | Crown, absenteeists, etc. | 718,202 |
| | Private owners | 1,496,539 |
| Law of July 17, 1921 | ,, ,, | 304,443 |
| | | 2,519,184 |

If we add to this the area now in course of expropriation, we find that nearly seven million acres of land will ultimately have changed hands in the Old Kingdom alone as a result of the new agrarian laws.

## BESSARABIA

The law voted for Bessarabia by the "Sfatul Ţarii" on November 27, 1918, and promulgated by royal decree on

[1] Early summer, 1923. These statistics, as also those for the new Provinces, were furnished me by the Minister of Agriculture through the kind intermediary of the Roumanian Minister in London.

December 22 of the same year, was much more drastic than any of the legislation we have just described. Total expropriation was proclaimed in the case of all Crown domains ("udel"), State lands ("hazna") and legal persons, this last stipulation being directed especially against the property of the "zemstvos" or communes. All the estates belonging to foreigners[1]; to the towns—save in so far as they were essential for their cultural needs; and to owners who had farmed their lands at any time between 1905 and 1918 for an uninterrupted period of five years, were to be treated in a like manner. In the Old Kingdom the ecclesiastical lands had been expropriated long since and the priests had become civil servants maintained by the State. In the new Provinces, on the other hand, the Church was an important landowner; and in Bessarabia its lands were expropriated completely, save only that each priest received from 6 to 8 has. (15 to 20 acres), while the local monasteries were allowed to retain $\frac{1}{2}$ has. ($1\frac{1}{4}$ acres) of land for each monk[2], in addition to their vineyards and orchards.

The private owners between them had to provide one million hectares ($2\frac{1}{2}$ million acres) of cultivable land, which was to be taken from all estates over 100 hectares. In the event of it being impossible to provide the prescribed total in this manner, expropriations were to be made at the expense of owners of estates of less than 100 hectares. This latter stipulation however was never applied, despite the need for land which resulted from the attempt to provide the Bessarabian peasant with a larger quota than fell to the lot of his counterpart in the Old Kingdom[3]. The Act of March 11, 1920, which amended the earlier legislation in several particulars, stipulated that owners of 100 hectares and over had the right to keep 100 hectares of cultivable land, as well

[1] *I.e.* those who had not made a declaration of Roumanian nationality by January 1, 1919. (This was later prolonged to May 1, 1919.)

[2] The quota was later fixed (by the Law of March 11, 1920), at 50 has. for each monastery.

[3] *Vide post*, p. 122.

as vineyards, orchards and nurseries of whatever extent which were in existence at the time of the promulgation of the earlier decree.

The application of these Clauses went ahead rapidly, especially after the Law of March 13, 1920, and by the early summer of 1923 the process was practically completed. In this manner 1,710,088 hectares were expropriated, though this total includes forests and waste land. The cultivable area available for distribution was thus considerably lower, at 1,260,770 hectares, or just over three million acres.

## THE BUCOVINA[1]

The property of public corporations was expropriated in the Bucovina on lines similar to those adopted in the other Roumanian Provinces. The cultivable area, as we have seen, was practically restricted to the river valleys, and here the demand for land was very great. A sliding scale of expropriations was adopted, which resembles in some respects that applied by the Decree of December 15, 1918, in the Old Kingdom. According to this,

| | Has. | Has. |
|---|---|---|
| Owners of estates of | 100 | kept 100 |
| ,, ,, | 200 | ,, 165 |
| ,, ,, | 400 | ,, 224 |
| ,, ,, | 600 and over | ,, 250 |

This scale, however, only applied to those proprietors who, in August, 1914, had agricultural installations of some importance; others being entitled to keep 100 hectares only. In the case of proprietors whose sons had attained a diploma in agriculture or who were studying agriculture, an extra 50 hectares was allowed[2]. The maximum and minimum limits were not unlike those adopted in the more thickly peopled regions of the Old Kingdom. As in Bessarabia, however, several estates owned by one proprietor ranked as a single property for the purposes of the Act.

[1] Decree of September 6, 1919; Law of July 23, 1921.

[2] This concession was also granted in the Old Kingdom.

The application of these stipulations began later in the Bucovina than in the other Provinces; and the total area liable to expropriation is only 55,208 hectares, of which the greater part has already been surrendered by the former owners.

## TRANSYLVANIA

In the former Roumanian Provinces of Hungary, and especially in Transylvania proper, the relatively small proportion of arable combined with the relative density of the population to make the agrarian problem more acute than might have appeared from a cursory glance at the statistics of ownership. These lands were therefore treated on conditions very similar to those enacted in the case of the thickly peopled regions of the Old Kingdom, save that the minimum to which the proprietor could lay claim in the worst case was considerably less, and the maximum in the best case slightly greater. We may add, in passing, that the lots assignable to the peasantry were also smaller than in the Old Kingdom. By the Law of July 23, 1921, those proprietors in rural and urban communes who had leased their land for ten years between 1904 and 1918 were left with only 30 cadastral holds (= 17¼ hectares = 43 acres) and 10 holds respectively. The quota which could be retained by other proprietors depended upon the density of population, as is shown in the following table:

(In cadastral holds[1])

| | Owners leasing their land | Cultivator owners |
|---|---|---|
| Mountain region | 50 | 50 |
| Hill region | | 100 |
| Regions of great demand | 100 | 200 |
| Regions of medium demand | | 300 |
| Regions where demand is satisfied | | 500 |

[1] The cadastral hold was, and to a considerable extent still is, the official unit of area. It is of Hungarian origin and =·57546 hectare =1·421 acres.

There was, however, a further clause empowering the Agrarian Committee[1], which was entrusted with the work of expropriation, to reduce the quota assignable to the large owners from 500 or 300 holds to 200, in districts where internal colonization was being undertaken.

From this summary it may be seen that cultivating owners are entitled to keep from 71 to 710 acres of land, according to the district; while in the thickly-peopled regions of the Old Kingdom, the corresponding limits are 247 and 617 acres respectively. The estates owned by corporations are liable to total expropriation, for the most part along lines with which we are already familiar. Absenteeists suffer a like fate, save that an exception is made in the case of properties not exceeding 50 holds (= 71 acres). They are defined as being all those who have been absent from the country between December 1, 1918, and the date of the passing of this Law (July 23, 1921), save only such persons as have been abroad in an official position under the government. This clause[2] recently provided a bone of contention between Hungary and Roumania which came up for the consideration of the Council of the League of Nations on more than one occasion.

As a result of the application of all these clauses together, 1,232,486 holds, or about $1\frac{3}{4}$ million acres, have been expropriated[3], the arable comprising 663,186 holds, or rather more than one-half of the total.

[1] *Vide post*, p. 118.

[2] Law of July 23, 1921; Article 6, sec. (c).

[3] Exclusive of forests, which are dealt with in a later section. The figures relate to the position in the early summer, 1923, and represent about 94 per cent. of the total land liable to expropriation under this legislation.

## § IV

## THE MACHINERY OF EXPROPRIATION AND POSSESSION

The application of these Laws necessitated an immense amount of work and, immediately after the war, the necessary organization was almost completely lacking. The expropriation of the landlords is perhaps the least difficult task from the technical point of view. The distribution of the lands to the peasants, on the other hand, involves considerable study of local conditions, while the work of surveying alone is immense. As many of the peasants already possessed one or more small parcels of land the new distribution consisted in large measure in bringing the individual holdings up to the statutory quota[1]. Unless, therefore, a certain amount of consolidation (commassation) of holdings could be accomplished while the new parcels were being distributed, the outcome might easily have been a veritable chaos from the economic point of view. In addition, of course, some attention had to be paid to the quality of the land, so that the parcels distributed in any region should be so far as possible of equal value. It is not necessary to enlarge further upon these technical difficulties, for it must already be clear that the peasants could not at once be placed in definitive possession of their lands. At the same time it was realized that the change of ownership in the Old Kingdom and in Bessarabia would have to be effected in some manner or other by the spring of 1919, if only for social and political reasons.

Fortunately there existed a precedent for the system of co-operative leasehold, for since the Peasant Revolt of 1907 co-operative peasant holdings had begun to make their appearance as a result of a law of that year[2]. It is not surprising therefore that the application of the Decree of December 15, 1918, should have been entrusted to the Central Organization of Land Banks and Peasant Co-operative

[1] *Vide post*, pp. 121–3. [2] *Vide ante*, p. 46.

Societies, which was reformed under the title of "Central Organization for Co-operation and Land Distribution," its headquarters being at Bucarest ("Casa Centrala a Cooperatie şi Improprietarirei Satenilor"). In Bessarabia, similar functions were performed by a special organization called "Casa Noastra[1]," with headquarters at Chişinau. Under the aegis of these institutions, local peasant associations (called "obştii") were formed in each commune. All land taken from the large owners by the "Casa Centrala" acting through any of its specially-appointed local Commissions, was immediately handed over for peasant cultivation to the "obştii."

This machinery was decidedly ingenious and had the great advantage of being already understood by many of the peasantry. It satisfied their immediate hunger for land without disorganizing agricultural production, while time was left to the various administrative bodies in which to settle the numerous questions raised in each locality prior to the final distribution of the land in individual lots. It is perhaps worth repeating that "obşte" land, though possessed in common, was worked severally by the members of the association, the quota of each individual being determined by the amount of labour and stock at his disposal. These associations, so long as they continued to exist, paid a rental to the former owners, and this was guaranteed by the "Casa Centrala."

In the Bucovina and Transylvania, on the other hand, where the amount of land, and especially of arable land, available for distribution was less extensive and where the immediate need for haste was much less pressing, these provisional measures were not adopted. Here, moreover, the very concept of peasant associations would have been strange and foreign[2]. Accordingly the work of expropriation was begun rather later in these Provinces, and the land was

[1] Literally, "our house."

[2] They had never existed in Transylvania, and the last "community holdings" of the old type in the Bucovina were done away with in 1835.

handed over at once to the new peasant owners in individual lots.

The work of dealing with all the problems raised by these Agrarian Laws was entrusted, in Bessarabia, to "Casa Noastra," as we have already seen[1]. In the rest of modern Roumania, however, the organization of the "Casa Centrala" has been supplemented by the creation of a number of special Commissions. At the head of these is the "Agrarian Committee," with special sections for the Old Kingdom, Transylvania and the Bucovina respectively. In each department ("iudeţ") there is also a special Commission, with a legal member, and one member each appointed by the "Casa Centrala," the local landowners and the local peasants. Finally, each "ocol," or canton, has a special Commission on similar lines. These bodies decide all questions arising out of the application of the various clauses, and provide the possibility of appeal from the decisions of the administrative officials who actually carry out the work of expropriation.

## § V

## COMPENSATION

THE new agrarian laws were in no way intended to lead to the confiscation of rural property in the country. Indeed the scale of compensation decided upon would have provided on the whole a very fair recompense to the dispossessed landlords—had monetary values remained stable! The rapid depreciation of the national currency, however, has deprived this part of our subject of all but theoretical interest; for all evaluations based on pre-war figures, with the leu equal to the gold franc, appear as simply ludicrous at a time when lei are quoted at 900 to the pound. Indeed, almost the whole

[1] The composition and detailed organization of this institution was definitely regulated by a special Law of October 6, 1920.

burden of this depreciation has fallen upon the dispossessed landlords, who represent far and away the greatest part of the creditor and *rentier* class of the country. Although compensation was intended on a fairly liberal scale for the owners of all the expropriated lands, the progress of events has rendered this illusory, and expropriation has in effect been equivalent to confiscation. Having regard to this fact the briefest summary of the compensation clauses will suffice for our present purpose.

According to the Decree of December 15, 1918, the price payable to the former owners was to be fixed in accordance with a number of considerations such as the price paid for similar land in the same or neighbouring localities during the five-year period ending August 15, 1916, assessments to the land tax, and any evaluations made by specialists. In no case, however, was the price to exceed the usual rentals paid in the district multiplied by twenty. By 1921, this was already out of date, and the July Law of that year fixed compensation on the basis of an evaluation made of the land, with a maximum of forty times the annual regional rentals established for the period 1917–22.

Under the terms of the December Decree, payment was to be made in special 5 per cent. Land Bonds, which were redeemable within fifty years. As it appeared at that time that the new peasant proprietors would be unable to meet this charge, the State undertook 35 per cent.[1] of the burden; the balance being met by annual payments by the peasantry. In 1921 it was hoped that currency depreciation would only be temporary and State help was still regarded as indispensable. Accordingly the quota payable by the new proprietors was fixed at twenty times the regional rentals for the period 1917–22, the State undertaking to pay the difference. The peasant was liable for annuity payments; though the immediate discharge of the capital sum was demanded in principle in the case of land expropriated in accordance with the July

[1] 25 per cent. in Bessarabia.

Law itself. Even in this latter case, however, payments could be spread over twenty years on favourable conditions.

From the point of view of the peasant, the price fixed on the basis of the 1916 assessment for the five-year period 1917–22, only represented, in paper lei, the equivalent of a six months' gold rental by the beginning of 1923. The real burden of the capital sum itself could not indeed have represented more than an eighteen months' rental and it is most unfortunate from the national point of view that the favourable conjuncture is not being utilized to a greater extent to discharge the entire obligation. The burden on the State has dwindled rapidly, and the special surtax instituted on war fortunes by Article 36 in order to diminish the obligations incurred under the Law has been of no importance in comparison with the depreciation of the currency.

From the point of view of the dispossessed landlords, however, the picture is very different, for not only do the Land Bonds held by them represent, in the most favourable case, no more than one year's gold rental on the 1916 assessment, but the Bonds themselves are only negotiable on the market at a discount of about 40 per cent.! "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The former Landed Proprietors in the new Provinces are in an even worse way, for the capitalization on the basis of annual rentals was calculated in lei. Russian roubles and Austro-Hungarian crowns, however, had depreciated merrily, even in terms of lei. With the introduction of Roumanian money in the new Provinces, roubles and crowns were alike treated as the equivalent of 50 bani (= $\frac{1}{2}$ leu), with the result that the gold value of the compensation accorded is here only half that ruling in the Old Kingdom. The sums involved, however, are so small in any case, that a further reduction hardly makes any difference.

## § VI

## THE NEW PEASANT PROPRIETORS

### THE OLD KINGDOM

The institution of peasant associations (obştii) was only a temporary measure and the first need was clearly to complete the work of expropriation. The definitive distribution of land to the new peasant proprietors was thus not dealt with in the Decree of December 15, 1918, but was left for treatment by a later Act. A Law of March 31, 1920, regulated this question by enacting that each peasant cultivator should have 5 hectares (12½ acres) of cultivable land, inclusive of any land he already owned. The peasantry were entitled to be seised of the available land in the following order of preference:

(1) Men mobilized in the war of 1916–19.
(2) „ „ „ campaign of 1913.
(3) War widows with children.
(4) Small cultivators with no rural property.
(5) „ „ whose property was less than 5 has.
(6) War orphans.

If sufficient land were not forthcoming to satisfy all these categories, some of the beneficiaries under the Act might elect to move to a colonization zone, where they would receive enough land for house and garden, 15 has. (37 acres) of cultivable land, a share in the communal pasture[1], and the necessary building material for their houses.

The codifying Law of July 17, 1921, embodies these provisions, and contains more details as to their practical application. It enacts that complementary allotments are to be made so far as possible in the immediate vicinity of the villages, and must never be less than ½ ha. (1¼ acres) in extent. In certain cases allotments may be reduced below the statutory quota of 5 has., while a portion of the land expropriated according to the terms of the Law itself over and above that expropriated by the application of the earlier

[1] *Vide post*, p. 124.

sliding scale may be distributed in allotments up to 10 has. in the hill region and up to a maximum of 50 has. (125 acres) in the less populated parts of the country. In the Dobrogea, where land is fairly abundant, the new holdings are to be of 8, 10 and 25 hectares, though the two latter categories together must not exceed 30 per cent. of the expropriated land in each commune. These Clauses represent what is unfortunately a somewhat belated and half-hearted attempt to establish medium holdings in the country.

### THE NEW PROVINCES

In Bessarabia agrarian legislation led not only to the expropriation of the large domains but also to the final breaking up of the "nadyel," which had already begun under the Russian regime[1]. The Law passed by the "Sfatul Ţarii" aimed at the creation of peasant properties of from 6 to 8 hectares according to the district; and from 8 to 10 hectares in the colonization zone in the South. The claims of cultivators living on each domain received priority over those living at a distance, while settlements in the colonization zone were to be made in villages and not in isolated farms. The actual application of the Law has shown, however, that the statutory quota for distribution was too big for the amount of land available. In practice, therefore, many of the allotments are smaller than was at first anticipated.

In the Bucovina, peasant holdings were fixed at 4 has. in the lowlands, with a maximum of 6 has. in colonization zones—which are very few. In the mountain region, where the proportion of arable is much smaller, the norm was to be 8 has. It was recognized, however, that there would not always be sufficient land to guarantee even 4 has. to each family; and the density of population is well illustrated in the fact that the minimum for complementary allotments is fixed at $\frac{1}{4}$ ha. in the Bucovina as against $\frac{1}{2}$ ha. in the Old Kingdom.

In Transylvania the norm is 7 holds (= 4 has.) in most

[1] *Vide ante*, p. 64.

cases, and 16 holds (= $9\frac{3}{4}$ has.) in colonization zones. War invalids who are able to engage in agricultural production are given priority, while all who have been guilty of acts of treason to the Roumanian State, or who have disregarded mobilization orders are excluded from participating. These latter stipulations apply equally in the Old Kingdom; while the organs for the application of these laws are similar in all the Provinces save Bessarabia.

## ALIENABILITY

The main object of this agrarian legislation is the establishment of peasant proprietorship on a firm basis throughout the country and the final abolition of the landless proletariat. With this end in view it is not sufficient merely to expropriate the large landowners and to divide the spoils among the peasantry. It is equally important to ensure that peasant holdings shall be maintained; and although Roumanian statesmen were not prepared to go so far as to declare that the new allotments were inalienable at law, they nevertheless provided certain safeguards to ensure that the objects of these laws should be achieved[1]. Thus, while peasants are entitled to sell their holdings after they have been paid for, the house and adjoining land to the extent of 1 hectare are declared to be inalienable. Moreover no sale is valid unless the State refrains from exercising the right of pre-emption accorded to it under the Statute, and even so no purchaser may acquire more than 25 has. in the mountain and hill regions, nor more than 100 has. in the plain. The purchaser is under an obligation to exploit in person all land so acquired, while no mortgage may be granted on peasant lands save by the co-operative banks, by the "Casa Centrala," or by some other institution approved by the State for the purpose.

## SUCCESSION

A further difficulty was anticipated from the constant subdivision of holdings which must inevitably follow the appli-

[1] Law of July 17, 1921, Chapter XVI, etc.

cation of the existing law of inheritance. The baneful effects of this tendency, from the economic point of view, have become only too apparent in France, and though no heroic remedy was devised for Roumania, limits were set by stipulating that the division of cultivable land may not proceed beyond 1 hectare in the hill region, nor beyond 2 hectares in the plain. Moreover testators acquire the right to stipulate in favour of one or more heirs in their wills, provided always that the co-heirs under the civil code, which enjoins the equal division of real estate, are duly compensated.

### CONTROL BY THE STATE

In order to ensure so far as possible that the new proprietors shall cultivate their land properly and shall market their products in an efficient manner, the "Casa Centrala" is empowered to impose obligations as to the rotations to be adopted and to encourage the founding of societies whose object is to be the introduction of more rational methods and the improvement of the breeds of live-stock. It was decided also that some of the available land should be withheld from peasant possession and retained by the State for use as model farms, breeding centres, agricultural colleges and experimental stations.

### COMMUNAL PASTURES

To complete the reorganization of village life, especially in the mountain region, steps were taken to establish communal pastures. A special Law was passed with this object in view in September, 1920, and in order to facilitate its application, the codifying Law of July 17, 1921, provided for the expropriation of land in the mountains which was exclusively used as pasture even in excess of the general quota of 100 has. which had normally to be left to the former owner. Clearings in the forests were subjected to similar treatment, as the shortage of suitable land made it necessary that something should be done for the Roumanian highlanders. Having regard to the rather special position of

pasture land in the peasant economy, the institution of communal ownership, which was applied in all parts of the kingdom, in preference to subdivision in individual lots was certainly a wise measure.

## § VII

## LAND OWNERSHIP AS MODIFIED BY THE AGRARIAN LAWS

It is as well at this juncture to endeavour to summarize the changes which have been effected as a result of the application of these Agrarian Laws in the distribution of rural property (excluding forests, vineyards and orchards, which were for the most part exempt from expropriation) in the various Provinces of modern Roumania. It must, of course, be remembered that all statistics can only be approximative, pending the results of the new survey which is being accomplished along with the final distribution of lands to the peasantry. The work of expropriation, moreover, is not quite finished, and only about a half of the new owners have as yet been seised of their property. In spite of these difficulties it is possible to form some idea of the prospective state of land ownership in all the Provinces save Bessarabia.

Old Kingdom

When the expropriations which are now in course of execution in the Old Kingdom have been completed, large estates will only account for about 14 per cent. of the total cultivable area. Medium holdings, from 25 to 250 acres, represented 11 per cent. of the total prior to the Reform, and have probably increased to 12½ per cent. or 13 per cent. as a result of this legislation; while peasant holdings under 25 acres, which previously formed only 40·4 per cent., now account for some 71 per cent. of the total and will ultimately represent over 73 per cent., after allowance is made for the expropriated lands which will pass into the hands of the State institutions.

The magnitude of the change is further brought home when it is remembered that prior to the Reform very large estates were fairly common in the country, while some actually exceeded 40,000 acres. Now, however, the largest estate is 1235 acres, while the average size of the estates retained by the former owners is only about 500 acres.

Transylvania

In Transylvania, the results of the Reform are perhaps not so striking, in consequence of the fact that there was much less arable land available for expropriation. Properties of 142 acres and over, which formerly constituted about 26 per cent. of the total agricultural area, have already been reduced to some 14 per cent., while the proportional share of the small peasant holdings has risen correspondingly. Properties from 28 to 142 acres formed over 30 per cent. of the total area in 1910, and their relative importance has probably not changed very appreciably.

The Bucovina

Finally, in the case of the Bucovina, holdings of 25 acres and under which previously formed about 48 per cent. of the agricultural surface of the Province, will henceforth constitute nearly 58 per cent., while medium properties of between 25 and 250 acres remain much the same at over 27 per cent. of the total. Estates over 250 acres will thus be reduced to some 15 per cent. of the total cultivable area, as against about 14 per cent. in the Old Kingdom. Unless some of the rural population can be moved from the thickly-peopled lowlands to the colonization zones of the Old Kingdom or of Southern Bessarabia, further legislation may yet prove necessary in the Bucovina, where peasant holdings remain very small.

Bessarabia

It is unfortunately much harder to estimate the final position in Bessarabia in consequence of the fact that under the Tsarist regime almost all peasant properties, of whatever size, were classed together as "nadyel." Estates over 100 desyatines (= 270 acres) previously accounted for about 40·7 per cent. of the total area. As a result of the Reform, however, no estate exceeds 250 acres, and it seems probable that at the present time properties under 25 acres form some

70 per cent. of the total, while roughly 30 per cent. consists of medium properties between 25 and 250 acres. The revolutionary nature of the Bessarabian legislation is, of course, at once apparent, for large estates have simply ceased to exist in the Province.

## § VIII

## FORESTS AND THE SUBSOIL

THE enactments we have considered hitherto applied solely to the cultivable land, which is defined as comprising the arable, meadow and pasture (including mountain pasture) only. The forests, however, have at all times and in all countries played an important part in the rural economy, and this is, of course, particularly true where conditions are fairly primitive[1]. In the New Roumania, moreover, forests represent very great potential wealth, if properly exploited, and the need for a definite policy of State control was apparent from the first. Forests

The acquisition of the Bucovina and the final settlement of ecclesiastical affairs in that Province on lines similar to those ruling in the Old Kingdom have already led to the vast forests of the "Religious Trust[2]" passing into the hands of the State. In Transylvania and the Banat again, a very considerable proportion of the forests formerly belonged to the Hungarian Crown, to which, of course, the Roumanian State has now succeeded. In Bessarabia, on the other hand, the forests, which were for the most part in private hands, only form a very small proportion of the total area, and the general disorganization which accompanied the revolution has led to enormous inroads being made upon them by lawless elements among the peasantry.

[1] We have already seen (*vide ante*, p. 27) that the unfree peasantry in Roumania had enjoyed common rights in respect of the forests, similar to the common of estovers in England, right down to the second half of the eighteenth century. Since that time, however, the forests have passed into the hands of the large owners, and Cuza's Law had merely shelved the question.

[2] *Vide ante*, p. 51.

# *Chapter Six*

# Agricultural Production Since the War

I. The Consequences of the War
II. The Old Kingdom
III. Bessarabia
IV. The Bucovina
V. Transylvania
VI. A Comparison between Roumania and Hungary

## § I

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

BEFORE attempting to estimate the economic consequences of the revolution in land ownership in Roumania it is necessary to consider in some detail the course of agricultural production in the country since the first application of the new agrarian legislation. The time that has already elapsed is, however, so short that it would be unwise to generalize too definitely from the available data. Moreover, the agrarian laws themselves were not applied immediately and our statistics of production refer to a period when the Reform was in course of execution. Finally, and most important of all, the World War succeeded in overthrowing the very foundations of the normal economic life of the country.

As a result of requisitions by the military authorities and especially by the armies of occupation, the contingent of live-stock in the Old Kingdom was sadly reduced in comparison with the pre-war position. The falling-off in the number of cattle was particularly serious and was bound of itself to lead to a considerable diminution in the total acreage brought under the plough. It is, of course, true that the deficiency was made good to some extent by the acquisition of the new Province of Transylvania which had hardly been touched by military operations, though even here large numbers of horses, sheep and pigs had been requisitioned for the use of the armies of the Central Powers. At the same time Transylvania cannot be said to have formed part of the theatre of war, in the same way as the Bucovina and the Old Kingdom, and but for the assistance furnished by this Province in 1919, the live-stock position would have been much more critical than was actually the case.

A glance at the relevant statistics[1] will give some idea of the ravages caused by the war in this respect; for the census

[1] *Vide* "Statistical Appendix," p. 191.

of 1919 revealed the fact that the number of cattle in the Old Kingdom was only 63·4 per cent. of that recorded at the last pre-war census, while horses were less than half as numerous.

The number of agricultural machines had also been sadly diminished and, most serious of all, perhaps, was the chronic shortage of seed corn. During the occupation the Germans had instituted a veritable "Raubbau" and the exploitation of the resources of the country was carried out in a most ruthless manner. In addition to this, labour was lacking after the Armistice, for events in Hungary delayed demobilization and the population of the Old Kingdom was itself reduced as a result of the war[1]. In 1919, again, the transport situation was chaotic, road and railway bridges had been destroyed wholesale and the permanent way had greatly deteriorated. In addition enormous inroads had been made into the supply of rolling stock which was only made good in part by the acquisition of a certain number of wagons and locomotives—most of which were in a very bad state—from Russia and the Central Powers. These acquisitions themselves, however, quite failed to compensate for the great increase in railway mileage which resulted from the union of the new Provinces with the Old Kingdom. River transport, too, was in an unsatisfactory condition, as some important channels had silted up. This lack of transport facilities greatly intensified the importance of the other factors we have enumerated and much delayed the progress of rural reconstruction.

In a word, the war and the occupation completely disorganized the whole economic life of the country, and this fact must always be borne in mind when considering the course of agricultural production since 1919 which is briefly outlined in the following pages.

[1] This latter element is unimportant when comparing agricultural production since the war with that of the five years 1909–13, for the average population of that period was about the same as that in 1919.

## § II

## THE OLD KINGDOM

UNDOUBTEDLY the chief achievement of the agriculturalists in the Old Kingdom of Roumania since the Armistice has been the re-establishment of the live-stock position of the country. The remarkable manner in which this has been accomplished is well brought out in the following table, which gives the various post-war totals as percentages of the latest pre-war figure[1]:

| | 1919 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Cattle | 63 | 73 | 88 | 96 |
| Horses | 49 | 55 | 65 | 74 |
| Pigs | 59 | 73 | 95 | 105 |
| Sheep | 42 | 51 | 69 | 79 |

During the period under review the virtual prohibition of exports has been an important factor and the intervention of the government in other ways has probably also been a contributory cause of the marked improvement which these figures show. Of interest for our present purpose is the fact that the increase in horses—which are used almost exclusively by the large and medium cultivators—is much less marked than that in cattle, which still enjoy pride of place among the peasantry. The increase in the number of sheep and especially of pigs is a sign of the gradual restoration of normal peasant life, though in the case of these animals there has been a tremendous shortage to make good as a result of the war. In considering agricultural production generally, however, the increase in cattle is of course the most important element in this connection.

When we turn to the problem of cereal production, the returns of total sowings provide a better guide, over a short period, than do those of crop results. This is particularly

[1] Census of 1916. For the actual figures, *vide* "Statistical Appendix."

true in the case under consideration, for the evil consequences of the war are especially reflected in the general harvest position, while the year 1921—the year of the Russian famine—was exceptionally dry in Roumania also, with most serious consequences to the crops. Moreover, 1922 was also well below normal from the climatic point of view, though, of course, much better than the previous year. For our present purpose, therefore, the following table of the post-war sowings of the principal cereals as percentages of the average for the years 1909–13 is of the very greatest interest:

| | 1919–20 | 1920–1 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Wheat ... ... ... | 36 | 57 | 60 | 59 |
| Rye ... ... ... ... | 47 | 51 | 42 | 49 |
| Barley ... ... ... | 86 | 121 | 148 | 168 |
| Oats ... ... ... ... | 112 | 143 | 161 | 165 |
| Maize ... ... ... | 89 | 88 | 94 | 94 |
| Total principal cereals | 70 | 84 | 92 | 94 |
| Total arable ... ... | 70 | 85 | 92 | — |

Perhaps the most significant feature is the continued improvement in the total sowings during these years. The cultivation of maize, which is the staple food of the peasantry, has remained on the whole remarkably constant; but the area devoted to wheat has suffered at the expense of oats and barley, which have recently acquired great importance. This change in the direction of production is undoubtedly due for the most part to the short-sighted policy of the government, which has, on more than one occasion, prohibited the export of wheat, instituted requisitions and fixed maximum prices for inland consumption. It is not, however, without significance that wheat is particularly important on large estates, where it represented (in 1920–21) nearly 30 per cent. of the total sowings, as against some 21 per cent. in the case of peasant holdings. At the same time peasant owners

accounted for over 81 per cent. of the total area down to wheat in the whole country; and it would easily be possible to exaggerate the importance of the change in ownership in this respect. Rye is only a very small feature in Roumanian production and need not detain us.

All cereals together still represent over 92 per cent. of the total arable, but it is gratifying to note, in passing, that the total arable itself is very slightly nearer the pre-war position than is the area down to cereals. This is mainly accounted for by the increase in the area down to potatoes and garden plants—which, however, are still far from receiving the attention they deserve—and by the fact that sowings of forage plants remain fairly constant. The cultivation of textile plants, such as flax, hemp and rape-seed, has, however, fallen off considerably, as these were grown almost exclusively on the large estates.

We may perhaps summarize the position in the Old Kingdom by saying that the total sowings have already come within measurable distance of the pre-war average; that the relative importance of the principal cereals taken together has remained practically the same; but that the distribution of land as between the different individual crops has changed enormously, wheat being the principal sufferer.

As we have already suggested, crop returns are apt to be very misleading over a short period, and the following table is given for what it is worth:

YIELD PER HECTARE

(In metric quintals)

| | Average 1909–13 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 12·9 | 8·6 | 10·1 | 10·2 | 11·0 |
| Barley | 10·2 | 11·6 | 8·1 | 12·5 | 12·0 |
| Oats | 9·4 | 11·5 | 9·0 | 10·3 | 6·5 |
| Maize | 13·1 | 14·6 | 8·7 | 10·3 | 14·6 |

The poor nature of the 1921 harvest is apparent from these returns. The yield of wheat shows a steady upward movement, though it still remains considerably below the pre-war average. Barley, on the other hand, is well above the earlier figure, while the oat crop has been very erratic. This also applies to maize though, with the exception of the very bad harvest of 1921, the yield of this cereal is not so very far removed from that of the last five years before the war.

## § III

## BESSARABIA

PARTICULAR interest attaches to an analysis of production in Bessarabia because the revolution in land ownership has been more thoroughgoing in this Province than in any other part of Roumania. Moreover, despite a short campaign between Roumanian and Soviet troops in 1918, Bessarabia suffered much less from the consequences of the war than the Old Kingdom or the Bucovina. This is well brought out by a comparison between the statistics of live-stock since the Armistice and the official Russian returns for the last pre-war year. The following table gives these post-war totals as percentages of the 1914 figure in each case:

| | 1919 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Cattle | 126 | 125 | 126 | 145 |
| Horses | 87 | 88 | 92 | 94 |
| Pigs | 99 | 123 | 135 | 145 |
| Sheep | 107 | 119 | 146 | 154 |

The only serious reduction has occurred in the case of horses, which had been requisitioned to some extent for military purposes during the war. Although oxen are the principal beasts of burden among the Bessarabian peasantry and, in consequence, have increased considerably of late

years, the contingent of horses in the Province was greater in the post-war years for which returns are to hand than in the year 1908, while the later figures show a considerable improvement over that for 1919. The quota of cattle per thousand of the population in 1921 was about 255 in Bessarabia, as against 355 in the Old Kingdom; while the figures for horses were 165 as against 107 respectively. This difference is accounted for chiefly by the greater relative importance of medium-sized properties in Bessarabia; while as the population of the Province has certainly not increased more than 5 per cent. since 1914, the quota per head of cattle, pigs and sheep has risen considerably since that date. The phenomenal increase in sheep—which to some extent take the place of cows in the peasant economy—is particularly remarkable, and the quota per head is now greater in Bessarabia than in the Old Kingdom, which was never previously the case.

These details have been given because the conclusion which may be drawn is of very great importance for our present purpose. In Bessarabia, where large properties have been eliminated, and where the ravages of war have been but slight, the live-stock contingent has increased enormously.

The reduction in the total area under cultivation in the Province is naturally much less marked than in the Old Kingdom, as is apparent from the following table which gives the post-war sowings as percentages of the pre-war acreage (average 1909–13)[1]:

| | 1919–20 | 1920–1 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Wheat ... ... ... | 78 | 74 | 79 | 113 |
| Rye ... ... ... ... | 71 | 48 | 43 | 54 |
| Barley ... ... ... | 112 | 98 | 101 | 117 |
| Oats ... ... ... ... | 275 | 347 | 435 | 385 |
| Maize ... ... ... | 93 | 98 | 85 | 87 |
| Total principal cereals | 97 | 94 | 94 | 109 |
| Total arable ... ... | 101 | 98 | 99 | — |

[1] *Vide* "Statistical Appendix," pp. 191–2.

The total arable is practically unchanged as compared with the pre-war average though the relative importance of cereals as a whole has diminished somewhat, as garden and forage plants are now cultivated rather more than was previously the case. The explanation of the reduction in the acreage down to wheat and maize is undoubtedly to be sought in export prohibitions and other government regulations designed to safeguard the food supply of the country, though the good wheat harvest in 1922 led to a great increase in the sowings of this cereal during the ensuing year. Since 1919 oats, which were not much cultivated in pre-war days, have more than taken the place formerly held by rye, which was never very important, while barley has remained fairly constant.

Apart from that of 1921, the harvests in Bessarabia compare for the most part very favourably with the pre-war average, which included no season at all comparable to the recent "famine" year.

YIELD PER HECTARE
(In metric quintals)

| | Average 1909–13 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 8·0 | 9·1 | 4·4 | 10·2 | 14·5 |
| Rye | 9·3 | 8·0 | 5·0 | 10·5 | 13·0 |
| Barley | 9·3 | 10·3 | 3·9 | 11·7 | 8·9 |
| Oats | 11·2 | 9·4 | 4·5 | 11·7 | 7·0 |
| Maize | 11·2 | 14·3 | 7·2 | 9·0 | 12·8 |

The great increase both in the acreage and in the yield of wheat in the Province in 1923 is a particularly gratifying sign. Of course it would be most dangerous to generalize from the results of the last two years, but at the same time these returns tend to confirm the general impression that agricultural production is in a fairly normal condition in Bessarabia, despite the Agrarian Revolution.

## § IV

## THE BUCOVINA

FOR our present purpose the course of agricultural production in the Bucovina is not of quite the same importance as that in the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia. Expropriations began much later and, even when the process is concluded, less than 10 per cent. of the total cultivable area will have changed hands. Moreover, the Province formed part of the theatre of war and suffered greatly in consequence, though the live-stock position was slightly better after the Armistice than was that of the Old Kingdom. By 1921, sheep, cattle and horses were all well over 90 per cent. of the pre-war figure, though the contingent of pigs was still less than half that shown in the census of 1910[1].

Agricultural production in pre-war days was more varied in the Bucovina than in the other Roumanian Provinces and cereals did not predominate to anything like the same extent as was the case in the Old Kingdom or Bessarabia. Since the Armistice maize has lost something of its former importance, while the post-war sowings as a whole are rather disappointing, as may be seen from the following summary of the percentual position as compared with the annual average of the years 1909–12:

| | 1919–20 | 1920–1 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total principal cereals | 76·7 | 82·2 | 85·7 | 93·3 |
| Total arable | 63·8 | 76·6 | 74·5 | — |

The decline in live-stock is undoubtedly partly responsible for the greater falling-off in the sowings of crops other than cereals; while the average yield has been unsatisfactory in most cases. Climatic conditions have not been perfect; and this little Province has still much leeway to make up in order to regain its pre-war level of production.

[1] *Vide* "Statistical Appendix."

## § V

## TRANSYLVANIA

TRANSYLVANIA is essentially a stock-raising country, and despite the fact that its resources had been drawn upon during the war by the Hungarian military authorities to a much greater extent than Hungary proper, the New Province was able after the Armistice to help re-establish the sorely depleted animal contingent of the Old Kingdom. Since 1919, moreover, the position has become much more normal, as witness the following table, which gives the post-war totals as percentages of the last pre-war census (1911):

| | 1919 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Cattle | 94 | 94 | 110 | 103 |
| Horses | 66 | 67 | 78 | 76 |
| Pigs | 68 | 66 | 82 | 70 |
| Sheep | 79 | 80 | 97 | 101 |

The steady increase in the first three years made possible the resumption of exports, which explains the falling off in the figures for 1922. On the whole, however, the development illustrated by these figures is quite satisfactory, but the position is very different when we turn to agricultural production proper. Despite the fact that an adequate number of oxen were available for ploughing, the reduction in the cultivated area of recent years is very marked. We give below the post-war sowings of the principal cereals as percentages of the average for 1909–13:

| | 1919–20 | 1920–1 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Wheat ... ... ... | 67 | 79 | 86 | 65 |
| Rye ... ... ... | 66 | 111 | 73 | 49 |
| Barley ... ... ... | 97 | 131 | 109 | 118 |
| Oats ... ... ... | 96 | 95 | 75 | 84 |
| Maize ... ... ... | 64 | 78 | 73 | 72 |
| Total principal cereals | 68 | 85 | 80 | 72 |
| Total arable ... ... | — | 82 | 77 | — |

With the exception of barley there has been a marked falling-off in the sowings of all the principal cereals. As Transylvania produces almost exclusively for the home market the change in the distribution of land as between the different cereals, which is so prominent in the Old Kingdom, has no real counterpart in this Province. In addition, however, to this falling-off in acreage, the diminution in the crop-yield is much more marked than in any other part of Roumania.

The causes of this unsatisfactory state of affairs are not easy to define. It can hardly be said that agrarian reform has been a very important factor either way, because the expropriations, which were effected for the most part in 1921, only led to 381,332 hectares of arable land changing hands, while the average arable area, exclusive of fallow, in the period 1909–13 was 3,021,924 hectares. As nearly a third of the arable lay fallow in pre-war days, it may be seen that less than 10 per cent. of the total arable has been expropriated.

It is a remarkable fact that agricultural production has fallen off most in the two Roumanian Provinces which have been least affected by the revolution in land tenure. The diminution in the population of Transylvania, which is certainly not more than 4 per cent., cannot be held responsible, as it has been effected for the most part at the expense of the urban districts. Climatic conditions, which, it is true, have not been over-favourable, may account in part for the poverty of the yield, but can hardly offer a complete explanation of the falling-off in the acreage under cultivation. For want of a better reason we are forced to conclude that the population of these Provinces, who endured four and a half years of belligerency, have been more demoralized by the war and its consequences than have those of the other Provinces. The Old Kingdom, despite all its sufferings, was a belligerent for about two and a half years only, while the population of Bessarabia suffered remarkably little in the turmoil of the late war[1].

[1] When enquiring as to war losses in Bessarabian villages the writer was struck by their relative insignificance. This impression has been

## § VI

## A COMPARISON BETWEEN ROUMANIA AND HUNGARY

THE reduction in agricultural production which we have noticed in the case of the Roumanian Provinces is not by any means confined to Roumania. Indeed, with the exception of Great Britain, almost all the European belligerents are in more or less similar plight. Before attempting to estimate the extent to which the application of the new agrarian legislation may have contributed in bringing about this state of affairs in Roumania it is of particular interest to compare the course of agricultural production in that country with that in the adjoining Kingdom of Hungary. While both countries have suffered from the war there can be no doubt that Hungary's losses[1] were less than those of the Old Kingdom, for the territory of the modern Magyar State did not form part of the theatre of war and, in consequence, its transport system and general organization were left practically intact. It is true that the country passed through a period of Bolshevism and that it then suffered an invasion by armies of the Little Entente and more especially Roumania. What is equally true is that the rural economy of the country was but little affected by all these events.

As a first step we give the returns of the first live-stock census in Hungary after the war, which took place in 1920 —that is to say after the Bolshevist episode and after the Roumanian occupation—calculated as percentages of the last pre-war census; with the corresponding figures for the Old Kingdom of Roumania and the totals for Greater Roumania respectively.

confirmed from other quarters. Russia suffered enormously, of course, but her total population was immense. Bessarabia, moreover, was in a sort of backwash—important chiefly as the richest corn-producing government of the South.

[1] By the term "Hungary's war losses" is meant the material damage suffered by the territory and inhabitants of present-day Hungary.

POSITION IN 1920[1]

| | Hungary | Old Kingdom | Greater Roumania |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Cattle | 97·2 | 73·2 | 84·9 |
| Horses | 80·1 | 55·3 | 65·5 |
| Pigs | 99·8 | 73·1 | 72·4 |
| Sheep | 61·3 | 50·6 | 66·7 |

It is perhaps worth pointing out that the Hungarian statistics for 1920, upon which these calculations are based, were not quite complete, as a small part of the country was still in enemy occupation at the time the census was taken. There can, however, be no doubt as to which country had suffered most from the World War and its consequences in this respect; and what was true of the animal contingent was equally true of agricultural equipment generally.

The great distinction between the two countries for our present purpose lies in the fact that while Roumania has undergone a veritable revolution in land ownership, modern Hungary remains as a land of vast latifundia, an island in the green sea of agrarian reform[2]. A com-

[1] For Hungary, *vide* "Statistical Appendix," p. 193.

[2] A word of explanation may be necessary for those who have read Prof. Max Sering's article in the *Manchester Guardian Reconstruction Supplement*, No. VI (1st series), pp. 367–70. Amongst many other very misleading statements will be found the following: "*Hungary*, after the overthrow of the Bolshevist rising, has decreed a very comprehensive agrarian reform, the work of a Parliament composed mainly of agriculturists and landowners. This law grants the State a right of pre-emption and only in the second resort of expropriation. The law provides no maximum limit for landownership, and is so carefully drawn up that it would be very difficult for any injury to agriculture to result from it."

The law in question was voted in December, 1920 (Law No. XXXVI, 1920). It was in fact "so carefully drawn up," by "agriculturists and landowners," that it would be very difficult for anything to result from it. In its number of December 31, 1922, the *Pester Lloyd* published official particulars of the application of this "Agrarian Reform" Law. Down to the end of 1922, *i.e.* after two years had elapsed since the law was passed, and eighteen months after the so-called "Agricultural Commission" set up by it had begun operations, only 130,211 cadastral holds

parison between the course of production in Hungary and that in the Old Kingdom of Roumania is thus of very great interest. Before the war large estates predominated in both countries; whereas now the old order has been maintained in the one case, while peasant proprietorship has largely taken its place in the other. Here again the comparison can best be made by taking the total sowings each year as percentages of the pre-war average, though unfortunately the Hungarian authority we follow has compiled his pre-war figures on the basis of the years 1911–15[1], while our figures for Roumania are calculated on the basis of the years 1909–13. This fact, however, operates in favour of Hungary, for the average production in the period 1911–15, which included one war year, was less than that for the five years ending 1913. As the pre-war base is lower, the post-war figure naturally gives a higher percentage. This fact, however, only makes the general conclusion the more surprising.

For the first three years total sowings in Hungary moved downwards, though a very marked increase is noticeable in the provisional returns for the year 1922–3. It is interesting to remember in this connection that the winter sowings of the agricultural year 1919–20 were made within a few weeks of the departure of the Roumanian troops and yet the total sowings in that year were not very different from those of the two following years. In the Old Kingdom of Roumania, meanwhile, the movement has been steadily upwards.

If we consider the total sowings of cereals in the two countries over the last few years, the comparison is not unfavourable to the Old Kingdom of Roumania—despite agrarian reform, which is often supposed to have paralyzed

(= 74,931 has. or 185,000 acres) had been divided out—and even this was not genuine expropriation, as the right of pre-emption was only exercised in respect of 6123 has.

The details of the Law need not detain us. A closer analysis than that apparently made by Prof. Sering would show that it was not a measure of Agrarian Reform in anything but the name.

[1] For the figures and sources, *vide* "Statistical Appendix," pp. 193–4.

production; while a comparison between sowings in Hungary and Bessarabia would be still less favourable to the former.

POST-WAR SOWINGS
(As percentages of the pre-war average)

| | 1919–20 % | 1920–1 % | 1921–2 % | 1922–3 % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Hungary:* | | | | |
| Wheat ... ... ... | 71 | 72 | 76 | 91 |
| Rye ... ... ... ... | 88 | 82 | 80 | 98 |
| Barley ... ... ... | 98 | 91 | 87 | 91 |
| Oats ... ... ... ... | 94 | 94 | 96 | 100 |
| Maize ... ... ... | 95 | 95 | 81 | 116 |
| Total principal cereals | 85 | 83 | 81 | 99 |
| *Roumania* (Old Kingdom): | | | | |
| Wheat ... ... ... | 36 | 57 | 60 | 59 |
| Rye ... ... ... ... | 47 | 51 | 42 | 49 |
| Barley ... ... ... | 86 | 121 | 148 | 168 |
| Oats ... ... ... ... | 112 | 143 | 161 | 165 |
| Maize ... ... ... | 89 | 88 | 94 | 94 |
| Total principal cereals | 70 | 84 | 92 | 94 |

Of course it would be dangerous to draw any very definite conclusions from the statistics of these abnormal years, and, whatever the ultimate consequences of the reform, there can be little doubt that the change from one regime to another must operate as a disturbing factor. At the same time, it is surprising that the disturbance has not been greater. While Hungary may have suffered more from a shortage of fertilizers than Roumania, we have already seen that her contingent of live-stock was considerably superior, and a shortage of proper seed and of agricultural implements was certainly even more acute in Roumania after the war than in Hungary. Moreover, the transport system of the former country was much more seriously disturbed as a result of the war than was the case in the latter. In a word, it seems quite possible that the lack of a proper solution of the agrarian question, which is very acute in Hungary, has proved at least as disturbing a

factor in the psychology of the rural population as has the actual operation of the reform in Roumania.

The figures for the two countries show a marked change in the distribution of land as between the different cereals, but this is largely accounted for by unwise interventions on the part of the government in Roumania, while in Hungary the export of all cereals was made very difficult if not impossible, a fact which certainly contributed to the general diminution in sowings.

The crop returns show that the yield per hectare has fallen considerably in Hungary of recent years; and, far from being markedly superior to those of Roumania, as was previously the case, they have now descended for the most part to the post-war Roumanian level[1].

It is probably safe to conclude from this short survey that the reduction both in the acreage and in the yield of cereals is due in the main to causes common to both countries, for while the war resulted in serious material loss to Roumania, its psychological effect appears to have been greater in the case of Hungary. This seems fairly certain even after allowance is made for the possibility of the rather more advanced technique of production in Hungary being dislocated by the war to a greater extent than the slightly more primitive rural economy of Roumania.

[1] *Vide* "Statistical Appendix," p. 194.

*Chapter Seven*

# The Economic Consequences of the Reform

I. The Economics of Small-scale Production in Agriculture
II. Agricultural Co-operation
III. The Agrarian Reform and Agricultural Production
IV. The Agrarian Reform and Agricultural Exports

## § I

# THE ECONOMICS OF SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION IN AGRICULTURE

MUCH controversy has taken place on the relative advantages and disadvantages of small- and large-scale production in agriculture, and it would be presumptuous to endeavour to dispose of so large a question within the limits of a few pages. It is nevertheless essential, for a proper understanding of our subject, that an attempt should be made briefly to formulate certain general conclusions which would probably receive a very wide measure of common assent.

In the first place it is worth considering how the size of a unit of agricultural production should be defined. Of course, no definite acreage can be laid down for all times and for all places, for much depends upon the type of crop grown and upon the intensity of production generally. The best line of approach is probably to consider the question from the point of view of the human content, as it were, of the unit of cultivation. In this way, agricultural production on a small scale may be defined as production by individuals or families without the aid of hired labour when agriculture represents the sole occupation of the cultivator. Medium-scale production may be said to exist when the unit is too large for cultivation without hired labour, but when the occupier and possibly his family actually take part in the work. Large-scale production, under this suggested classification, exists when the occupier is simply engaged in the work of direction and of supervision; while "Latifundia," or very large units of production, necessitate a whole machinery of officials to direct and exploit the estate with hired labour. Hard and fast lines cannot of course be drawn between these different categories, which often merge into one another. In districts of mixed farming, such as the hill region in Roumania, properties up to about 25 acres would be regarded as

small; those from 25 to about 150 acres as medium; and those over 150 as large according to this classification. In the plains and especially in the Steppe zones, where cultivation is much more extensive and where cereals predominate almost to the exclusion of everything else, a farm of 50 acres would appear as small; while large units would be those of 300 acres and over. This classification, of course, can only be regarded as approximative.

In considering the relative advantages of these different categories from the economic point of view it is essential to remember that there are certain fundamental distinctions between agriculture and other types of industry, all of which result from the fact that industrial production is in the main a mechanical process, while agricultural production proper is essentially organic. For this reason it is dangerous to discuss problems of rural economy in terms of industrial organization. The continuous flow of production, which is of the very essence of industry proper, is almost completely lacking in the case of agriculture, where nature itself is the real producer and where labour must of necessity take a second place. Agricultural production is dependent upon the seasons, and the labour process is liable to constant interruption on this account. As a result of this the ever-increasing subdivision of labour, with consequent specialization, which is so characteristic of industrial organization, is practically impossible in the case of agriculture, where the year's work is made up of a chain of successive tasks which, though related to one another, are not interchangeable in point of time. Production cannot therefore be speeded up, save within very narrow limits, and in this respect too agriculture is in marked contrast to almost all other industries.

In the case of a factory, production is concentrated in one centre, and the raw material is brought to the machinery. On a farm, on the other hand, where the land itself is part and parcel of the production process, the labour and the

machinery, if any, must be taken to the raw material. In consequence, agricultural machinery must of necessity be small in comparison with that used in other industries; and it can, of course, only be successfully applied at certain seasons of the year. Moreover the larger the unit of production, the greater the distances to which labour and machinery must usually be taken.

From the fact of discontinuity in production, both in respect of time and of place, it is apparent that the problem of supervision is in agriculture much more difficult than in most other types of economic activity. The results of bad workmanship often do not appear until long afterwards, and it is therefore not surprising that the personal element should be of the very greatest importance.

The principal advantages of small- and medium-scale production can be derived from the central question of supervision. The more intensive the production and the more delicate the operations involved, the greater will be the influence of this factor. Individual care and personal attention are especially important in the handling of stock and in the cultivation of certain crops, such as sugar beet and tobacco, and in the last two cases at any rate large-scale organization is generally at a disadvantage.

In agricultural production proper the disadvantages of the small unit result mainly from the fact that peasants are usually ignorant and much behind the times. That this is not a necessary concomitant is, however, shown by the efficient state of agricultural production in Denmark, where the yield of cereals compares very favourably with that of any country in the world, and where small-scale cultivation is the rule. Given a certain level of education amongst the rural population, it seems probable that the advantages which a large owner derives over the small man from the possession of capital are more than counterbalanced by the difficulties of supervision, and by the absence of incentive on the part of the hired labourer. Of course certain crops involve a

greater measure of risk than do others[1], and for the cultivation of these the capitalist is certainly at an advantage. The very nature of agricultural production, however, sets limits to the use of machinery and to specialization, with the result that the differential advantage of the large unit is not so great in this respect as might at first sight appear, especially if allowance is made for the possibilities of co-operative enterprise.

From the point of view of agricultural production proper, therefore, it appears that the chief advantage of the large producer lies in the fact that he is usually more enlightened and more up-to-date in his methods than are the peasantry. Moreover, such advantages as he possesses are more to the fore in extensive cultivation, and tend to become progressively less as the intensity of production increases. Wide expanses of plain and steppe are particularly suited for mechanical ploughing and for the use of machinery generally; while in regions where peasant holdings consist of a number of isolated strips of land, the small cultivator shares some of the disadvantages but none of the advantages of the large-scale producer. The medium cultivator, on the other hand, has many of the advantages and few of the disadvantages of both categories; while latifundia are usually too unwieldy to be exploited as such with any great measure of efficiency.

Closely connected with the question of the unit of cultivation is that of the unit of ownership. We need not here concern ourselves with the typical English system by which the landowner normally leases his land in the form of medium-sized farms and provides a part of the working capital in addition to the land itself, for this type, though it has very much to recommend it, is practically non-existent in Roumania. In the latter country prior to the Reform the large landowners either worked the land themselves in the form of large farms or latifundia; or else leased it to middlemen

[1] Thus in Roumania the annual yield of maize is on the whole more constant than is that of wheat.

to be so worked; or else leased it in small parcels to peasants who worked it either as tenant farmers or else as metayers. In the somewhat rare event of the landlord being himself a keen and enlightened agriculturalist, the large farms and latifundia were very well cultivated on the most up-to-date methods. It is tolerably certain, however, that not more than one-third of the large properties at the very most, or some 16 per cent. of the total cultivable area, were scientifically exploited in this manner. When this was the case the efficiency of the large owner-cultivator probably more than made up for the difficulties of supervision and the lack of incentive on the part of the labourers.

When the land was farmed out to middlemen they did not always work it on a large scale themselves. In the event of their so doing, the labourers were usually driven fairly hard, and it is doubtful whether the land was really so well worked as it was by the best of the large landlords cultivating on their own account. It was quite common, however, for the middleman to sub-lease to the peasantry. In fact if we add together the area leased direct by the owner and sub-leased by the middleman, it is safe to estimate that nearly 15 per cent. of the cultivable land of the country was worked by the peasantry on some form of metayage tenure. While this system may be quite efficient when the landlord contributes a certain proportion of the working capital and exercises an enlightened supervision over the metayers themselves, in Roumania the proportion of the produce taken as rent was usually so large[1] that the metayer only succeeded in earning the bare necessaries of existence. The landlords, moreover, habitually regarded this form of tenure as being the best calculated to save them unnecessary trouble; and it is not too much to conclude that metayage in the Old Kingdom, by preventing any advance in the cultural development of the peasants concerned, suffered from all the disadvantages of small-scale production without providing that stimulus to

[1] Often amounting to one-half of the total.

the worker which is the cardinal advantage of peasant proprietorship.

"Ownership," said Arthur Young, "turns sand into gold"; and the energy of the small owner-cultivator is notorious. There is indeed every incentive to exertion, and the difficult problems of supervision simply do not arise. Not only is the peasant proprietor usually much more efficient than the small metayer; but in most kinds of agricultural production proper he has little to fear from a comparison with all save the best large and medium owner-cultivators.

## § II

## AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATION

HITHERTO we have been concerned in this chapter with agricultural production proper, or the various organic processes with which the rural population are principally concerned. It should not be forgotten, however, that the working up of agricultural products[1] is a mechanical rather than an organic process, and here the advantages of large-scale organization are much greater, since production can be concentrated and greatly speeded up by the use of machinery. Again agricultural products must be marketed, and for this to be done efficiently a considerable amount of grading is indispensable. Moreover, the agricultural producer himself needs a number of raw materials, while a certain amount of specialization is necessary if maximum efficiency is to be attained in the selection of seed varieties and of stock.

In all such respects production on a large scale is at an advantage—unless the small units unite together for these special purposes. The very nature of these activities, however, marks them off from agricultural production proper, and

[1] As, for example, butter-making and bacon-curing. In the latter case, large-scale organization renders possible the utilization of a number of by-products which are otherwise wasted.

there is thus no reason why they should not be undertaken on a large scale side by side with the small unit in all other branches of the industry. Indeed the union of a few hundred small men will represent organization on a larger scale than is possible even in the case of the largest of large farms. Moreover, while it is a matter of common experience that medium and large cultivators will seldom unite in this manner[1], peasant co-operatives have already attained a considerable degree of importance in many European countries.

In addition to its potentialities in the industrial and commercial sides of agriculture, co-operation can be of assistance even in some spheres of agricultural production proper. Thus co-operative ploughing is of considerable importance in some countries and its potentialities are very great in regions like the Roumanian lowlands, where hedges are quite unknown. The co-operative utilization of machines for mowing, reaping and binding—which would undoubtedly be hindered by the vagaries of the climate in a country like England[2]—should be quite feasible in Roumania, where the weather is a relatively constant factor at any given season of the year.

It would appear, then, that most of the disadvantages of small-scale production in agriculture could be successfully overcome in Roumania by means of a well-organized co-operative system. If such is indeed the case peasant proprietorship would be very nearly ideal from the economic point of view.

[1] It is interesting to notice that while agricultural co-operation has made but little progress in England—a country of large-medium farms, the movement is relatively quite important in Wales, where small and small-medium farms predominate.

[2] One of the arguments against the co-operative utilization of agricultural machinery in England is that, as the climate is so uncertain, advantage must be taken of each suitable day as it comes along. Farmers, it is stated, would never be able to agree among themselves as to which of them should have the machines on any given day, and an advance time-table would, of course, be impracticable.

## § III

## THE AGRARIAN REFORM AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

We are now perhaps in a position to attempt to estimate the probable consequences of the revolution in land ownership in Roumania on the course of agricultural production in that country. At the outset, however, it is well to distinguish between the immediate and the ultimate consequences; for the very fact of rapid change tends to operate as a disturbing factor and it would be unwise to deduce the permanent consequences of so important a movement from knowledge derived during a period of transition.

### THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES

From the short period point of view the problem may be summed up in the following manner. After the Armistice Roumania was faced with the vast task of rural reconstruction. In addition to the material damage suffered as a result of the war and the enemy occupation, these years of turmoil must have had a demoralizing effect upon the psychology of the people, for after a long war, as is well known, the desire to work usually falls far short of the need for labour. The statistics of production in Bessarabia and, to a somewhat less extent in the Old Kingdom—where, however, the difficulties were much greater—show that the work of rural reconstruction has been accomplished in a remarkably efficient manner. This fact is brought out all the more clearly by a comparison between these Provinces and the adjoining kingdom of Hungary, where the task of reconstruction was very much simpler.

If we proceed, next, to endeavour to imagine what would have happened in Roumania after the war had the old regime been maintained unaltered, we must ask ourselves whether the will to work would have been as great among the peasantry as has in fact been the case. Anyone who has been present

at the ceremony which accompanies the seisin of their lands by the new peasant proprietors, or who has travelled through the Roumanian country-side of recent years must have been struck by the fact that the rural population is now contented and active. It should not be forgotten, moreover, that a serious revolt broke out as recently as 1907, and that the war increased rather than diminished the land-hunger of the peasantry. Had this Agrarian legislation not been passed there can be no doubt that discontent would have been general—even if nothing worse had taken place. Under such conditions the progress of rural reconstruction would have been doubly difficult, whereas, thanks to the recent Reform, a new stimulus to greater activity has been present among the mass of the people which has had a most salutary effect on the course of agricultural production.

Of course not all the land expropriated was immediately brought into cultivation. In the year 1919 some 346,000 hectares lay fallow; though this total was reduced to 235,000 hectares in the following year; and fell to 119,000 hectares in 1921. The proportion of the arable remaining in the hands of the large owners which lay fallow was, however, even greater; though, having regard to the vast amount of work to be done, and to the shortage of labour which prevailed in 1919, it is perhaps not surprising that the peasant owners should have been the more successful in this respect. The institution of peasant associations ("obştii") was a most happy inspiration and has undoubtedly helped in tiding-over the transition period. Taking all things together, it would appear fairly safe to conclude that the Reform, by opening up new vistas of hope and by providing new inducements to work among the rural population, has been of invaluable assistance in bringing about the re-establishment of more normal conditions of agricultural production in the Old Kingdom and in Bessarabia. In the other Provinces the operation of this factor has been very much less important, as we have seen, for the total arable available for distribution

was very much less extensive. In Transylvania, however, the stock-raising industry has regained almost normal dimensions; while the total of domestic animals throughout the whole of Greater Roumania has recovered amazingly well from the ravages of the war.

While the general consequences of the Reform, from the point of view of production, appear to be fairly satisfactory over the short period under review, there have certainly been many mistakes in certain details of its application. Thus under the earlier sliding-scale estates were expropriated in some parts of the country—as, for example, in the department of Constanţa in the Dobrogea—where there were not sufficient peasants to undertake their cultivation. In these cases the land was frequently leased back to its former owner—a proceeding both stupid and unjust; for the owner surrendered his land at a price well below its market value, and rented it back at its commercial value. Abuses of this sort arose from the fact that the application of the Decree of 1918 really called for a far-reaching policy of internal colonization, and this had not been thought out. Again no proper test of fitness was imposed in the selection of those peasants who benefited under the terms of the Act. Thus in certain cases semi-nomadic gipsies (the so-called "lautari," or musicians), with no previous experience of agriculture, suddenly acquired land of their own.

It is however dangerous to make mountains out of molehills, despite the fascination of the process, and although there can be no doubt that many mistakes would have been obviated had these laws been more carefully drafted, a consideration of the facts of production since 1919 does not appear to justify the assertion that "modern Agrarian Reform has beyond all doubt reduced the agricultural productivity wherever it has been carried out[1]." It is indeed reasonably certain that the reduction in the cultivated area in Roumania since the war would have been much greater but for the

[1] Sering, Art. *cit.* p. 368.

salutary effects of the new legislation on the psychology of the rural population.

## THE ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCES

In attempting to estimate the long period results of the Reform on agricultural production too much reliance should not be placed upon the statistics of recent years. In the absence of any definite data we shall indeed be forced to rely on speculation, and in this the general principles we have outlined must be interpreted in the light of Roumanian conditions.

One point is, however, of particular importance. Certainly not more than one-half of the land which has recently passed into peasant hands was acquired at the expense of large estates which were worked as such. The remainder was previously worked by the peasants, as metayers or as tenants, so that in a considerable proportion of the cases where the unit of property has changed, the unit of cultivation remains the same as before.

In the second place nearly 14 per cent. of the total agricultural area of the Old Kingdom will still be in the hands of the large proprietors when the whole work of expropriation has been completed; and this is probably more than half the total of the land actually worked on a large scale in pre-Reform days. If the large owners, in the straitened circumstances in which they are placed to-day, devote more energy as a class to agriculture than they previously did, and if they cultivate all their land themselves instead of leasing it to metayers, the large unit of production (*i.e.* the estate of 250 acres and over) may still be an important factor in the national economy. Of course, estates over 1250 acres no longer exist, but the latifundium is probably the least efficient of the larger units of production. In all considerations of this kind it must be borne in mind that the majority of large landowners formerly took practically no share whatsoever in the direction of their estates. If in addition it is remembered that quite large farms still remain in parts of the Steppe

zone, it is clear that recent agrarian legislation has effected a much smaller change in the unit of production than is frequently supposed.

On the other hand peasant properties prior to the war were often ridiculously small; and an increase of from say 3 or 4 to 12 acres may make a considerable difference to the efficiency of the average unit. It is usually forgotten that the Agrarian Reform has not only reduced the average size of the large estates, but has also increased the size of previously existing peasant holdings. Unfortunately, however, the application of these laws has not been so successful as might possibly have been expected in consolidating peasant properties. In a large number of cases, indeed, it has led to the creation of small strips of peasant land—a defect we have already noticed in the case of Cuza's Emancipation Law of 1864. Land tenure of this kind is usually most inefficient, as the examples of France to-day and of South Germany in the third quarter of the last century prove only too clearly. The Roumanian Law of July, 1921, allowed for this in part by enacting that communal pastures should be instituted. The need for a rational subdivision was freely admitted, and the Casa Centrala was empowered to proceed to reconstitute rural properties in accordance with the terms of a special law regulating the whole matter[1]. The question is for the moment in abeyance and is of course full of serious practical difficulties. At the same time the process of consolidation is the necessary complement to the legislation with which we are here concerned and it is in every way to be hoped that this task, which is of the greatest importance from the economic point of view, will be taken in hand with the least possible delay. Ideally the work of distribution and of reconstitution should have proceeded hand in hand. In practice, however, it was felt that the former task was so pressing, for political and social reasons, that delay would have been most unwise.

[1] Agrarian Reform Law of July 14, 1921, Art. 136.

In pre-war days the average crop yield from the large estates worked as such was usually superior to that obtained by the peasant proprietors or by the small tenants and metayers. This may be accounted for in part by the fact that the boyars had succeeded in keeping the best lands for themselves at the time of the redistribution of 1864. It is more probable, however, that this result was due chiefly to the superior methods employed by the large owner cultivators. It seems possible, therefore, that the total production will be reduced proportionately to the extent to which the *land cultivated on a large scale* has passed into peasant hands. The position, however, is not irremediable. On the one hand much might be accomplished in a relatively short space of time by education. The Roumanian peasant is naturally alert, and forms a marked contrast in this respect to his Ruthene neighbours to the north. The last two or three years, moreover, have witnessed the beginnings of a new enthusiasm for education in the rural districts which finds no parallel in the earlier history of the country. Without exaggerating the significance of this tendency, which is doubtless due in large measure to the acquisition by the mass of the people of a new sense of their importance in the national life, it is safe to conclude that the omens are favourable to the vigorous application of a policy of educational reconstruction on the part of the government. On the other hand something could be done by a further development of the existing machinery of rural co-operation. The co-operative purchase of seed, for example, might well lead to a considerable improvement in the quality; while co-operative ploughing should prove quite satisfactory in the lowland regions.

The problem of the future is indeed very largely the problem of production in the Danubian plains and Steppes. The dislocation has here been greatest, and it was from this region that an important part of the surplus wheat of the country was previously derived. In the hill region, on the other hand, the increase in the size of the average peasant

holding should have the most beneficial results on production, especially when the consolidation of the strips has been accomplished.

## § IV

## THE AGRARIAN REFORM AND AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

We have dealt hitherto with the new peasant proprietor as a producer. There remains the much more difficult question of the effect of the Reform on peasant consumption, and hence on the surplus available for export.

The general standard of living in pre-war Roumania was very low, and it would be natural to expect that the peasant, when virtually freed from the payments that had formerly to be made to the landlords, would take advantage of his new position to enjoy more of the good things of this world. There are indeed reasons for believing that the consumption of meat has already risen in the country. Whereas all save the richer of the peasants were previously unable to kill more than one pig a year for their own consumption, what was the great event of Christmastide is now repeated three or four times annually. The increase in the acreage down to potatoes and garden plants generally in the Old Kingdom is also not without significance when considering the gradual rise of the standard of living among the peasantry, and this tendency may well become even more important in the near future. Again exports of live-stock of recent years have been much smaller than might have been anticipated in view of the incorporation of Transylvania in Greater Roumania. This may well change, however, when the live-stock contingent of the country as a whole has attained its pre-war level, though increased consumption on the part of the peasantry is certainly a factor to be borne in mind.

Any attempt to estimate statistically the direction of cereal

consumption in Roumania during the last few years is most dangerous in view of the shortness of the period and of the thoroughly abnormal conditions which have prevailed. In 1919 the country was actually obliged to import cereals, and even in 1920 exports were almost negligible. During these years consumption was well below the pre-war level, and it is only since the harvests of 1921 and 1922 that exports have been possible on any appreciable scale. The harvest of 1921, however, was particularly unsatisfactory, especially in Bessarabia, and thus in only two cases (1922 and 1923) has there been any real surplus for export.

In the case of wheat, rye, barley and oats exports normally begin early in August each year, while maize, which is gathered in much later, only becomes available in November, most of it being moved in the following spring. If then it is desired to compare statistics of exports with those of the crops, the former should run from August 1 of each year in the case of wheat, rye, barley and oats; and from November 1 in the case of maize. This method is of fundamental importance over a short period and has been adopted in the following tables. A further difficulty arises when estimating consumption over a very few years from the fact that, even with this method, a certain amount of overlapping must necessarily occur. In the absence of adequate statistics of stocks, however, this drawback is inevitable.

It must be remembered that in this section we are dealing with the production, exports and consumption of cereals over the whole of modern Roumania. The addition of Transylvania has of course proved a burden from this point of view, for crop returns in that Province, which incidentally has been less affected by the revolution in land ownership, have fallen off very much more than has been the case in the rest of the country. A considerable proportion of the surplus from the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia must have been diverted westwards to make good this deficiency, for the crop figures for these regions show that the Old Kingdom still

had a considerable corn surplus, while Bessarabia in 1922 was not far removed from its pre-war position.

The approximate production of Greater Roumania of recent years compares as follows with the average for the five-year period 1909 to 1913:

CEREAL PRODUCTION
(In thousands of metric tons)

| | Average 1909–13 | 1921 harvest | 1922 harvest |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 4085 | 2138 | 2504 |
| Rye | 470 | 231 | 234 |
| Barley | 1375 | 985 | 2042 |
| Oats | 905 | 963 | 1336 |
| Maize | 5175 | 2885 | 3026 |
| Total | 12010 | 7202 | 9142 |

While the acreage down to the principal cereals was in 1921–2 over 89 per cent. of the pre-war average, the actual cereal crop was only about 76 per cent. of the earlier standard —a result due in large measure to the poor yield of maize, as we have already seen.

A comparison between this table, which is fairly accurate, and that of exports, which, so far as the pre-war average is

EXPORT OF CEREALS
(In thousands of metric tons)

| | Average 1909–13 estimated | 1921–2 | 1922–3[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 1700 | 98·0 | 49·9 |
| Rye | 150 | 30·7 | 0·5 |
| Barley | 850 | 335·8 | 825·7 |
| Oats | 150 | 182·8 | 286·7 |
| Maize | 1250 | 330·1 | 226·0 |
| Total | 4100 | 977·4 | 1388·8 |

[1] This is an estimate, as the complete returns were not available at the time of going to press.

concerned, is almost entirely a matter of conjecture, is not without interest.

The probable home consumption of the principal cereals thus appears to have been somewhat as follows:

CONSUMPTION OF CEREALS
(In thousands of metric tons)

| | Average 1909–13 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 2385 | 2040 | 2454 |
| Rye | 320 | 200 | 233 |
| Barley | 525 | 649 | 1216 |
| Oats | 750 | 780 | 1049 |
| Maize | 3925 | 2555 | 2800 |
| Total | 7905 | 6224 | 7752 |

While the failure of the Bessarabian harvest in 1921 is reflected in the abnormally low figures of production and export, it also influenced the consumption figures. On the strength of the 1922 crop, on the other hand, consumption in the "cereal" year 1922–3 was probably very near the pre-war average. As the actual population of the Roumanian lands was much the same during the two periods, it is perhaps safe to assume that the annual cereal consumption per head has not greatly changed. It is significant, however, that whereas the consumption of wheat has risen slightly, the importance of maize in the peasant dietary has fallen off considerably.

We have already hinted that the fixation of maximum prices for wheat and maize in the home market, combined with temporary prohibitions of the export of these cereals—both measures being designed by the government to safeguard the national food supply—has done much to encourage the cultivation of barley and oats. It is interesting however to observe that these cereals must also have entered into the dietary of the peasantry to a by no means inconsiderable extent—though the partial eclipse of "mămăliga" is probably

only temporary, and is certainly accounted for by the poor showing of the maize crop in 1922.

Our figures refer to too short a period and are too uncertain to serve as more than a very rough and ready guide. It seems to be at least probable, however, that any addition to the total harvest of cereals over and above the 1922 level will be available for export during the next few years in any case, while the consumption of cereals has almost certainly attained very nearly to its pre-war dimensions.

Of course the export trade has now to overcome obstacles that were unknown in former days. In the first place there may well be a deficit in Transylvanian production[1] in the immediate future which will have to continue to be made good at the expense of the surplus accruing from the Old Kingdom and from Bessarabia. Again the commercial side badly needs overhauling. Prior to the Reform peasant exports were mainly sent through the intermediary of the large landowners, who, incidentally, made handsome profits in the process. Their place will now have to be taken in part either by other middlemen or else, best of all, by co-operative selling societies.

Thirdly, the peasants have recently been marketing their cereals in a much dirtier condition than was the custom of the large landlords. The proportion of foreign matter has indeed frequently attained appalling dimensions of recent years, and has practically excluded Roumanian cereals from the London market[2]. This is due in part no doubt to post-war conditions, which have nowhere made for honesty and efficiency. But although an improvement is already noticeable in this connection, a return to the pre-war standard will only

[1] It is worth repeating that Transylvania proper was not quite self-sufficing in cereals before the war, while with the Banat and Crișiana, production probably about equalled consumption. On the other hand, Transylvanian exports of live-stock should soon help the Roumanian trade balance considerably more than they do at present.

[2] The proportion of foreign matter in wheat, for example, which was rarely above 2½ per cent. in former days, has recently been about 8 per cent., while the barley is said to be even dirtier. Under these conditions exports go to Antwerp rather than to London.

be possible when the whole process of handling and marketing has been put on a new basis. The best of the old landowners devoted much care and attention to maintaining the purity of their products. This can only be accomplished under the new order by combinations of the peasantry, or by government or private organizations for the establishment of a network of local collecting stations where the grain can be properly treated and, when necessary, stored, prior to its being forwarded to the elevators at the principal ports. There can be no doubt that if some scheme of this sort were adopted —and this would be relatively inexpensive and would lead, if properly planned, to a rational utilization of the navigable highways of the country—the efficiency of the grain export trade would be greater than in pre-war days.

Fourthly, the present system of export duties needs considerable revision. While there is no likelihood of this form of taxation being abolished in the immediate future for financial reasons, the duties could be rendered far less harmful than they have been hitherto. The duty on a wagon of a given cereal is now calculated on a gold basis, and is thus not affected by currency depreciation. It is, however, established in fact on what is practically a fixed scale, and does not allow automatically for variations in world prices. The introduction of the sliding-scale principle is a matter of urgent necessity, as the present method, harmless enough in practice during the boom period, when, incidentally, exports were very limited, is a source of great inconvenience in a period of low world prices.

Finally the disadvantages of currency fluctuations need a passing reference. The leu is naturally in demand during the late summer and early autumn when a great proportion of the cereal shipments are made. There seem to be indications, however, that, in 1922 at any rate, an attempt was made to take advantage of this fact in order to effect a permanent improvement in the exchange. The resultant fall in paper prices naturally caused suspicion among the corn exporters and certainly restricted the volume of exports in consequence.

# *Chapter Eight*

# General Consequences of the Reform

I. National Unity and the Minorities
II. Political and Financial
III. Social and Cultural

## § I

# NATIONAL UNITY AND THE MINORITIES

In tracing the historical evolution of the agrarian question in the Provinces which are now united together in Greater Roumania, we saw how it came about that the landowners were frequently of a different race from the peasantry. In the Old Kingdom many Phanariote Greeks acquired large estates, especially during the eighteenth century. In course of time, however, these foreigners were merged in the boyar class of Wallachia and Moldavia and by the second half of last century they had become Roumanian in all but descent. In Bessarabia, on the other hand, the old Moldavian boyars had been supplanted to some extent by Great Russians, Germans, Bulgars and Armenians, and such as remained were gradually becoming Russified. In the Bucovina, again, the Jews had managed to acquire a very large proportion of the landed estates of the old Moldavian nobility who, under Austrian influence, were rapidly becoming Germanized. This process of denationalization is well illustrated by an episode which occurred during a short stay once made by the late King Carol of Roumania—himself a Hohenzollern—at the railway station of Cernauti. Turning to Baron Mustatza, one of the Moldavian boyars of the Province, the King addressed him in Roumanian. "Wir sind deutsch erzogen, Majestät," was the prompt reply.

If these tendencies were so marked in Bessarabia and the Bucovina—lands which had continued to form part of the old Moldavian Principality right down to about the end of the eighteenth century—it is not surprising that the national cleavage between landlord and peasant should have been even greater in Transylvania, which had been incorporated in the Kingdom of St Stephen for nearly a thousand years. Indeed despite the fact that the Roumanian peasantry formed by far the largest element in the population of this Province,

only about a tenth of the large estates were in Roumanian hands[1]. Most of the remainder belonged to the Magyar magnates and to Jews, Germans and Saxons.

When we bear these facts in mind, recent agrarian legislation, which, in the Old Kingdom, has led to the transfer of land from one Roumanian social class, not to say caste, to another, is significant, in the new Provinces, from a national as well as from a social point of view. As this question is one of considerable importance in the political sphere and is interesting also for the light it throws on problems of nationality in Eastern Europe, we append a table of the expropriated landowners in the new Roumanian Provinces, divided accord-

| Nationality | Transylvania | Bessarabia | Bucovina | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Magyars | 2218 | 3 | — | 2221 |
| Roumanians | 555 | 445 | 61 | 1061 |
| Jews | 443 | 71 | 184 | 698 |
| Germans | 216 | 165 | 13 | 394 |
| Russians | — | 365 | — | 365 |
| Saxons | 208 | — | — | 208 |
| Poles | 3 | 104 | 61 | 168 |
| Bulgarians | — | 149 | — | 149 |
| Armenians | 11 | 132 | 3 | 146 |
| Serbs | 103 | 2 | — | 105 |
| Greeks | — | 93 | — | 93 |
| French | — | 16 | — | 16 |
| Gagaouzes[2] | — | 10 | — | 10 |
| Ruthenes | 1 | — | 6 | 7 |
| Czechoslovaks | 3 | — | 1 | 4 |
| Italians | — | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| British | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| Other | 8 | 1 | — | 9 |
| Total | 3769 | 1558 | 330 | 5657 |

[1] Roumanians formed nearly a seventh of the total number of large landowners, but their estates were considerably smaller, on the average, than those of the Magyars.

[2] The Gagaouzes are Turkish-speaking Christians, of Bulgarian origin for the most part. They are found in Southern Bessarabia and in the North of the Dobrogea.

ing to their nationality—giving this word its real and not its legal connotation[1].

This table refers of course solely to the number of proprietors who were affected by the Reform and not to the amount of land provided by each nationality. Thus the large landowners of Bessarabia were between them deprived of considerably more land than the far more numerous owners in Transylvania who came within the scope of the Reform Laws. The average area ceded by each owner in the latter Province will indeed be only about 340 hectares, if forests are included, or some 190 hectares of arable and pasture, when the work of expropriation is complete. In Bessarabia, on the other hand, the corresponding sacrifice is about 897 hectares for each individual[2]. If this fact is borne in mind it appears that the preponderance of the Magyars is greater in the numbers affected than in the losses involved.

It goes of course without saying that the revolution in land ownership has greatly diminished the prestige and importance of the alien aristocracy in these Provinces. The movement, however, was nevertheless essentially a social one, for not only were Roumanian landowners expropriated on a large scale in the Old Kingdom of Roumania[3], and in Bessarabia; but the Magyar peasantry in Transylvania and the Ruthenes in Bessarabia and the Bucovina have benefited from the application of these laws on the same conditions as their Roumanian colleagues. It may be worth mentioning as an example, that the writer was present at a ceremony of

[1] This table, which is fairly complete, was drawn up on the basis of returns forwarded me by the Roumanian Statistical Service, through the kind intermediary of Colonel Rosetti.

[2] This comparison which we have made for lack of a better, is somewhat inadequate, as the total hitherto expropriated in Transylvania is 1,209,010 has. (or 708,679 has. of arable and pasture) *inclusive* of State and Church lands; while the Bessarabian quota is calculated on the basis of the total (1,398,291 has.) ceded by private persons only.

[3] In the Old Kingdom some five thousand Roumanian private owners have already surrendered over 1,842,500 hectares, and this total will have risen to over 2,000,000 hectares, exclusive of forests, or about 400 has. for each individual, when the present expropriations are completed.

expropriation in Northern Bessarabia where Ruthene peasants were seised of lands that had formerly belonged to a very wealthy Moldavian (*i.e.* Roumanian speaking) boyar. It is indeed a significant fact that, although the Ruthenes form the only considerable "Russian" minority in Bessarabia, there was not a single Ruthene landowner of any importance in the Province under the old Russian regime, though a large proportion of the total area of the country was still owned by Moldavian landlords.

The Saxons and the Szeklers of Transylvania, who were and still are large peasant owners for the most part, have not been very greatly affected by the recent changes. It is perhaps worth noting further that in the case of these two peoples there have been few, if any, complaints as to the non-observance of the Minority Clauses of the Treaty signed by Roumania at Paris in December, 1919[1]. Indeed the "Minority" problem among the Saxons and the Szeklers is a purely national question, which is complicated neither by political irredentism nor by class grievances.

In the case of the Transylvanian Magyars proper, however, of whose maltreatment very much is heard from time to time in some sections of the British and foreign press, the problem is essentially political and social. For our present purpose the agrarian aspect of the case is alone relevant. The Magyar magnates have been expropriated on the same terms as all other Roumanian citizens in Transylvania. It is true that the application of the Reform was in the hands of Roumanian officials who enjoyed wide discretionary powers in questions of compensation and like matters, under the terms of the various Agrarian Reform Laws themselves. It is certain that these officials sometimes took advantage of their privileged position and it is possible that this may have occurred in the case of expropriations effected at the expense of Magyar-

[1] For an account of these Clauses and the machinery available for ensuring their observance *vide* an article by the present writer in the *British Year Book of International Law for* 1923, especially pp. 101–10.

speaking proprietors. In such an event, however, recourse could at once have been had to the League of Nations machinery for dealing with Minority questions, and this has in no case taken place hitherto. If abuses have in practice been at all frequent, this fact is all the more remarkable in that a rather frivolous petition from the Bessarabian Russians (not Ruthenes) was heard by the Council of the League on March 26, 1922—though no action was recommended; while the case of the expropriation of Hungarian optants from Transylvania, which is not a minority question at all, has received careful attention on the part of the Council of the League.

A consideration of the position of the Magyar minority proper in Transylvania, as also in the remarkably similar case of Slovakia, cannot but lead one to the conclusion that the issue is above all a social one. Bitter complaints are naturally made by the dispossessed landlords that they are unable to maintain their social hegemony over the wretched and, from their point of view, hardly human peasantry. So far as the present writer is aware, however, no such complaints have been made by the Magyar peasantry themselves, who form after all the majority of the Magyar minority, and whose lot under foreign domination is much lighter than that of their fellows in the modern Kingdom of Hungary itself.

If the national element has been far from predominant in the Agrarian Legislation of Greater Roumania, the religious question has played no rôle whatever. Of the expropriated landlords in the new Provinces who declared their adherence to any particular confession, nearly one-half belonged to the Orthodox Church. The relative importance of the different creeds is illustrated in the following table:

| | |
|---|---|
| Orthodox (Eastern Church) ... | 2545 |
| Lutherans ... ... ... | 1268 |
| Catholics ... ... ... | 804 |
| Jews ... ... ... ... | 556 |
| Armenians ... ... ... | 135 |
| Uniates (Roman Orthodox) ... | 83 |
| Baptists ... ... ... | 2 |

Attempts have been made to insinuate that the recent revolution in land ownership in Greater Roumania was designed to overthrow the hegemony of political or religious minorities. It is, of course, true that the centre of political gravity has been changed thereby. There can be no doubt, however, that it has moved not so much from one nationality to another, as from one social class to the other. The peasant has everywhere triumphed at the expense of the landlord.

## § II

## POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL

The coming of peasant proprietorship coincided in point of time with the introduction of universal suffrage. The old system of election by "colleges," which was even more reactionary than that prevailing in Prussia under the old regime, has disappeared along with the great latifundia. It may be remembered that these two reforms were laid down by the Roumanian Council of Transylvania as fundamental conditions for the union of that Province with the Old Kingdom; and their combined effect has completely changed the political structure of the Roumanian lands.

Agrarian Reform has freed the peasant from dependence upon the landed aristocracy, while universal suffrage has provided him, theoretically at least, with an opportunity for making his newly-found independence a power in the political world. Unfortunately both reforms were carried through at break-neck speed before the necessary preliminary training had been accomplished. Under these conditions the political consequences of the revolution in land ownership are largely a matter of speculation.

In one sphere, however, the establishment of the new order has led almost immediately to a very embarrassing situation. The depreciation of the national currency, which

has reduced to a shadow the expropriation charges which have to be met by the peasantry, has also complicated enormously the by no means enviable task of the Minister of Finance. In a country where some 80 per cent. of the total population is engaged in agriculture, revenue has to be raised mainly by means of indirect taxation. In Roumania, however, the peasant village is very nearly self-sufficing, with the result that the mass of the people escape the nets of the Customs officials. The revenue obtainable from excise and the government monopolies, while important, is limited for the same reason. A land tax, on the other hand, is clearly more difficult to collect from 600,000 peasants than from 5000 large landlords. Even so, however, the ruling assessments, which were made in pre-war days, have been rendered quite antiquated by currency depreciation.

It is of course clear that nobody delights in paying taxes; and the distrust of the whole governmental machine felt by many of the peasantry is not calculated to make them use their newly-acquired political influence to introduce taxation which will fall most heavily upon their own class. Education and political experience have been in large measure denied them, thanks to the "benevolent despotism" of the ruling aristocracy of pre-war days. Without these, however, the responsibilities of citizenship cannot but be imperfectly appreciated. Unable to spring fully armed from the reaction of ages of impotence to the forefront of the political stage, the peasant is none the less clear that he will not pay any more in taxation than he can possibly help. His first contribution to the political life of his country is thus negative rather than positive, and it would be safe to conclude that no government would dare to apply a really vigorous measure of financial reform in the face of peasant opposition. Under these conditions, an export tax on cereals, bad as it is in principle, is more or less inevitable.

It would be difficult to say precisely to what extent this state of affairs is due to the introduction of universal suffrage

as compared with the influence of the agrarian reform with which we are more particularly concerned; while but for currency depreciation, which was an inevitable aftermath of the war[1], the whole outlook might have been modified considerably. In another sphere, however, the direct influence of the establishment of peasant proprietorship is more marked. It must have been clear from what has already been said that the peasant producer has been in receipt of considerable sums of money for the sale of his produce, part of which, at least, would previously have gone to the large landowners. For the reasons we have given it is hard for the government to get at this potential source of taxation, while, as the peasant's needs are simple and easily satisfied, the money derived from the sale of his commodities has not for the most part passed into commerce or industry. If, finally, we add to all this the fact that the rural population distrusts banks[2] and investment it is apparent that a by no means inconsiderable amount of currency is each year withdrawn from circulation. Of course some of this treasure is stored in places where "moth and rust doth corrupt," and rats certainly help the government by eating up or disfiguring currency notes. At the same time the tendency to hoarding leads to a chronic shortage of money, while recourse to the printing press to make good the deficiency would certainly have bad results on the psychology of the business world and hence on the rapidity of circulation of the currency in the urban areas. The Finance Minister is indeed confronted with a series of problems which can only be solved gradually.

In their present state the peasantry can sometimes be led fairly easily by irresponsible agitators, though governmental pressure at election time, which is carried through on the approved "modèle Napoléon III," helps to keep the ship of state in something approaching its accustomed channel.

[1] If only by reason of the conversion of Austrian and Russian notes in the New Provinces.

[2] Even the co-operative banks have not as yet succeeded in overcoming this distrust completely.

Fortunately the Roumanian peasant is fairly shrewd and much can be hoped from education and even more from an augmentation of his material needs.

For the moment, then, the political machine continues to function much as before, save in the world of government finance. Revolutionary movements will now be met by a contented peasantry and the innate conservatism of the rural population has plenty of scope for making its influence felt. We have already referred to the beginnings of a popular enthusiasm for education, which is perhaps the most promising sign in the new Roumania. In general the national temperament is such that there seem to be no reasons for fearing that the triumph of the peasantry will lead to acts of repression against the bourgeoisie such as unfortunately characterized the internal administration of the late Mr Stambouliski in Bulgaria. For the moment indeed the "tsaranist," or peasant party, is making relatively little headway in Roumania, and this is almost certainly due to the indifference of the peasantry to active organization in the political sphere rather than to the measures of repression that may sometimes be employed by the government in power. After all, the ruling parties were responsible for agrarian reform and this fact counts for much.

It seems likely that many years will elapse before the mass of the people will take any active share in the political life of the country and this is probably to be welcomed in the interests of the democratic experiment itself. A brusque change from one regime to another, indeed even a rapid transition from bad to good, is more than a primitive social organism can stand. In the countries of Eastern Europe especially, the burden of a dismal history cannot be got rid of in a day. In justice, however, the recognition by the governing classes of Roumania of the principle that it is wrong to resist the inevitable and wise to anticipate future developments should be counted unto them as virtue—a virtue rare enough, indeed, in the political history of more advanced States during the last few years.

## §III

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

It is sometimes asserted that the triumph of the peasant in Eastern Europe will put back the progress of civilization for many generations[1]. The old aristocracy, it is alleged, represented Western culture in semi-barbaric lands, and with its virtual elimination, the whole country will relapse into darkness.

In dealing with this aspect of the question in Roumania much, of course, depends upon the temperament of the individual writer. One point, however, is incontestable. The former landowning classes in the Old Kingdom retain in full property about 14 per cent. of the total agricultural area and, with some little energy on their part, they will still have the wherewithal to assert their "cultural supremacy." In actual fact, however, the lamp of civilization in the large manor houses often burns exceeding dim. This much-vaunted culture is in large measure but a faint reflection of the glories of an age that has long since passed. An effete aristocracy living on the crumbs which fall from the tables of their French masters—such is the Ichabod of Roumanian society. Slavish imitation is, of course, notoriously devoid of cultural value, and the passing of the civilization of the boulevard calls rather for tears of joy.

In the old days many travellers were struck by the relative *éclat* of manorial life which, at first sight, gained so much from a comparison with the squalor of the neighbouring domain village. A moment's reflection, however, would have shown how dear was the price paid, and this would have been brought home still more by a visit to parts of the hill region where the descendants of the "knesi" and "mazilii" of earlier days still formed the true aristocracy of the country.

[1] Cf. Art. by Mr L. B. Namier in *Manchester Guardian Reconstruction Supplement*, No. VI, pp. 366–7: "...the level of economic culture and still more of intellectual culture will sink low," etc.

From 1860 onwards much progress has been made in the cultural sphere. Universities have sprung up and have already produced historians and scientists of European repute. Music, painting and literature too have begun to come to their own amongst a people who are certainly richly endowed by nature in matters artistic. In hardly any of these directions, however, have the large boyar families played a predominant rôle. Indeed the intellectual class of modern Roumania has sprung above all from the small landowners and the more prosperous of the peasantry. Of course, there have been a certain number of distinguished exceptions to this rather broad generalization. In the main, however, it is true that the mass of the aristocracy have preferred acquiring a somewhat superficial acquaintance with French life and manners, rather than sharing in the much more arduous task of laying the foundations of a new culture which must ultimately embrace the whole nation in its scope because it is in accord with the nature and genius of the national character. Fortunately, however, the good work has been carried on despite what can only be described in the main as the apathy and indifference of the old aristocracy.

Agrarian Reform has been proclaimed for years as the first essential by the pioneers of the new cultural movement, who have always believed that the way to solve the social question in the country lay first and foremost in the raising and the uplifting of the despised peasantry. As this task was neglected by the aristocracy, the passing of the old order appears, not so much as the triumph of the dead hand, but as an historical necessity in the cultural development of the Roumanian people.

In one respect, however, the new agrarian legislation has certainly hampered the intellectual life of the country. The various learned societies at Bucarest had been endowed with land by their founders and benefactors, and the expropriation of estates belonging to public institutions has left them in a somewhat precarious financial position. The damage is not

of course irreparable, but, for the moment, their activities are considerably circumscribed in consequence.

Agrarian Reform opens out new possibilities in the lives of the mass of the people. If the new peasant proprietors acquire those qualities of sturdy independence and unbounded vitality which have characterized the "free" peasantry of the country throughout the centuries, the ultimate future of Roumania is indeed a bright one. The present, however, is a period of rapid transition in the social history of the people and much depends upon the lead from above. But whatever the future may have in store, it seems reasonably certain that servile adherence to a culture and a point of view imported from France is now doomed for all time.

While the Roumanian people still have much to learn from Western Europe it is even more important that their leaders should realize that the nation, like the individual, must work out its own salvation in its own way. The passing of the landed aristocracy as a predominant influence in the political and social structure of the country should greatly simplify the realization of this ideal.

# *Chapter Nine*

# The Historical Perspective

With the coming of the French Revolution a new chapter opened in the agrarian history of Europe. Not only were medieval survivals swept away in France itself but the contagion of emancipation spread gradually eastwards. In Germany the reforms initiated by Stein brought even East Prussian conditions more or less into line with the new view of the legal status of the private individual, while the Agrarian Laws of 1848 proved almost the only definite survival of that year of general upheaval in South Germany and in the lands owning the sway of the Hapsburgs.

After a further short pause emancipation was carried through in Eastern Europe in the sixties. This fourth great wave of agrarian reform began in the famous decree of Alexander II abolishing serfdom in Russia in 1861, and continued in the legislation of Prince Cuza, inspired in part by the Russian precedent, in Roumania (1864). These reforms were much more revolutionary in *tempo* than the earlier emancipation movements in the West; though here too a change was effected in the legal status of the peasant, and in the ownership of the land, rather than in the structure of agricultural production. The peasants were freed from their former state of subjection—which had been particularly burdensome in Eastern Europe—but the large estates worked by or on behalf of the landed aristocracy were consolidated and, though somewhat diminished in area, continued to form a very large percentage of the total cultivated land. The conservative spirit in which the Reform of 1861 was conceived is shown further by the fact that in Great Russia the "mir" (or village communal holding) was maintained unchanged—to the great delight of Panslavs and Socialists alike.

By the sixties of last century, Agrarian Reform, beginning in France, had spread right across the Continent of Europe and, with the sole exception of some of the lands under Turkish rule, the emancipation of the peasants was prac-

tically complete. Their personal status at law had been in every case completely changed; while in addition they had acquired, in a great number of cases, full proprietary rights over a very large proportion of the area previously cultivated by them. It is important, however, to emphasize the fact that the landed aristocracy also acquired a full legal title to the land which it had previously cultivated; and from the economic point of view, this legal reform had been accomplished without any parallel change in the average size of the actual unit of production so rapid or so violent as to justify the epithet of "revolutionary." With but few exceptions the large estates remained a very important element in rural economy throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, if we view the movement as a whole, we see that, with the noticeable exception of Roumania, and, to a lesser degree, of Russia, these agrarian changes were not precipitated at a violent speed but were carefully planned and actually carried out, not at once, but over a long period of years.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to point out that the whole trend of Agrarian Reform was individualistic. In place of medieval rights we find freedom of contract—which often appears as the right of the strong to dominate the weak, as the latter are no longer protected by long-established custom. At the same time the growth of individualism made possible the introduction of a more rational system of cultivation, though progress in this respect was exceedingly slow in the eastern half of the Continent.

During the forty years immediately preceding the World War not much further was accomplished in the way of agrarian legislation. The rural population, however, was increasing rapidly, especially in Eastern Europe, and more land was being brought under cultivation. This benefited the large owners, as the new land was usually reclaimed from their waste, while the increase in population led to a superabundance of agricultural labourers, who were forced to work on the large estates for very low wages in those cases

—and they were many—where they were not able to migrate to the towns.

After years of war and dislocation unparalleled in modern economic history came the fifth great wave of agrarian reform which, unlike its predecessors, swept from East to West; from the vast and interminable plains of Holy Russia right into the very heart of Central Europe. This latest phase of the agrarian question should be regarded, not merely as a great and revolutionary innovation, the undesired offspring of Slavo-Marxian doctrines, but rather as the outcome, at once logical and inevitable, of centuries of human history.

The recent revolution in land ownership in Roumania will rank in the modern history of Europe as a small but not unimportant part of this last great movement of Agrarian Reform. A study of the part may well help towards an appreciation of the whole, though for our present purpose, we have made no attempt to consider to what extent, if any, the conclusions we have endeavoured to draw in the case of Roumania are likely to hold good for the other countries concerned[1]. To complete the historical perspective, however, it is necessary to interpret this legislation in terms of the Agrarian history of Roumania itself.

The necessity of drastic changes in land ownership arose above all from the fact that the Reforms initiated by Prince Cuza, which were satisfactory enough from the point of view

[1] In Roumania, for example, the large estates will continue to be fairly important; while in Russia they have been, for the present, at any rate, completely abolished. In the various new Baltic States, legislation has followed much the same lines as those adopted in the case of Bessarabia. Finland, however, provides an exception to this generalization, as the *Lex Kallio*, so named after its principal sponsor, aims primarily at establishing peasant proprietorship by agreement with the large landowners. The Reform has been applied, in a fairly drastic fashion, in Czechoslovakia, while conditions in Jugoslavia—where the interesting question of personal status arises in some parts of the country as, *e.g.* in Bosnia and in Serbian Macedonia—are truly chaotic. Agrarian Reform can only be said to have begun in Greece in 1923; while in Hungary and, to a less extent, in Poland and, perhaps, in East Prussia too, the problem has not as yet been taken seriously in hand.

of the personal status of the peasantry, proved completely inadequate to satisfy the land-hunger of the rural population. The growth in the population since that date made the problem progressively more acute, and yet all proposals for reform collapsed in face of the determined, but short-sighted, opposition of the landowning classes. It needed several peasant revolts, a world war, and the Bolshevist Revolution in Russia to convince these boyars of the folly of attempting to fight against the inevitable—and they have paid the price of their intransigeance.

But what of the sacred rights of property? What of the morality of expropriation which is virtually confiscation? These are weighty questions which demand some sort of answer. The whole issue, however, turns on whether the right of prescription is as valid morally as it is legally. Right down to the eighteenth century there was no question of land ownership in Roumania. The boyars had certain personal claims against the "rumâni" and "vecini," and these in turn had certain claims against their lords. At a time when the peasant came to his own in France the wretched "rumâni" and "vecini" were having to submit to fresh and unheard-of exactions on the part of the boyars in Roumania. It seems, indeed, probable that the conception of the boyars as legal owners of the land did not receive full recognition until the "Règlement Organique" of 1831.

Ever since that time they have done all they could to impose upon the rural population, and have shown no particular regard for legality, still less for morality, in the process[1]. They made the proper application of the terms of the Law of 1864 impossible, and never troubled then as to the legality of their actions. At long last, however, fear has brought about in a day what generations of reason and morality had failed to accomplish.

[1] It would be easy but unnecessary to pile up illustrations of lawlessness on their part. Enquiries made in 1907, for example, proved that agricultural contracts were hardly ever drawn up in a legal fashion. The laws thus broken were of course designed to protect the peasants.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, the revolution in land ownership is now an accomplished fact, and for good or for ill, peasant proprietorship is firmly established in the country. Before venturing to assert, however, that a final solution of the agrarian problem has been arrived at, it will be necessary to wait and see what the effect of a higher standard of living will be on the future growth of population in the country.

# *Statistical Appendix*

# STATISTICAL APPENDIX

In the following tables relating to Greater Roumania the pre-war figures have been taken from the Roumanian Statistical Annual (*Anuarul Statistic al României*) for the Old Kingdom of Roumania; from the Russian Statistical Annual (*Annuaire Statistique Russe*) for Bessarabia; from the Austrian Statistical Handbook (*Handbuch der Oesterreichischen Statistik*) for the Bucovina; while the returns for the districts incorporated in the modern Province of Transylvania have been calculated from the Hungarian Statistical Annual (*Annuaire Statistique Magyare*).

In the totals of domestic animals the last pre-war census returns are given. These were taken in 1916 in the Old Kingdom; in 1910 in the Bucovina; in 1911 in Transylvania; and in 1914 in Bessarabia. It was unfortunately not possible to obtain figures relating to the same year for all the Roumanian lands. Since the war, however, returns have been made annually throughout Greater Roumania.

The pre-war figures for the principal cereals relate to the average for the five-year period 1909–13 in each case, save only in that of the Bucovina, where they refer to the years 1909–12. It is worth noting that the pre-war figures for the Old Kingdom do not include the two departments of Durustor and Caliacra, which were ceded by Bulgaria in 1913. In calculating the percentage tables given in the text, however, allowance has been made for this by first deducting the post-war returns for these districts from the corresponding totals for the Old Kingdom.

The post-war figures are taken from the official Bulletin of Agriculture (*Buletinul Agriculturii*) for the respective years. The returns for 1922–3, however, are only provisional as the final results were not available at the time of going to press. They should, therefore, be treated with some caution. A consideration of the general reliability of agricultural statistics in Eastern Europe would lie outside the scope of this present work.

## DOMESTIC ANIMALS

(In thousands)

| | Last pre-war census | 1919 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. *Cattle:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 2938 | 1863 | 2151 | 2580 | 2823 |
| Bucovina | 228 | 181 | 147 | 213 | 234 |
| Bessarabia | 526 | 663 | 657 | 662 | 765 |
| Transylvania | 2051 | 1927 | 1920 | 2266 | 2110 |
| Greater Roumania | 5743 | 4634 | 4875 | 5721 | 5932 |
| 2. *Horses:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 1219 | 603 | 675 | 792 | 903 |
| Bucovina | 70 | 36 | 58 | 64 | 72 |
| Bessarabia | 464 | 403 | 408 | 428 | 435 |
| Transylvania | 514 | 339 | 344 | 402 | 392 |
| Greater Roumania | 2267 | 1381 | 1485 | 1686 | 1802 |
| 3. *Pigs:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 1382 | 822 | 1010 | 1309 | 1447 |
| Bucovina | 219 | 88 | 67 | 104 | 121 |
| Bessarabia | 349 | 346 | 430 | 473 | 508 |
| Transylvania | 1521 | 1033 | 1006 | 1245 | 1070 |
| Greater Roumania | 3471 | 2289 | 2513 | 3131 | 3146 |
| 4. *Sheep:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 7811 | 3306 | 3953 | 5414 | 6197 |
| Bucovina | 189 | 100 | 119 | 184 | 235 |
| Bessarabia | 1488 | 1594 | 1776 | 2180 | 2297 |
| Transylvania | 3532 | 2790 | 2842 | 3416 | 3591 |
| Greater Roumania | 13020 | 7790 | 8690 | 11194 | 12320 |

## SOWINGS OF THE PRINCIPAL CEREALS

(In thousands of hectares)

| | Average 1909–13 | 1919–20 | 1920–1 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. *Wheat:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 1852 | 782 | 1161 | 1209 | 1197 |
| Bucovina | 21 | 12 | 15 | 22 | 19 |
| Bessarabia | 729 | 571 | 536 | 575 | 828 |
| Transylvania | 978 | 658 | 776 | 844 | 640 |
| Greater Roumania | 3580 | 2023 | 2488 | 2650 | 2684 |

SOWINGS OF THE PRINCIPAL CEREALS (*continued*)

(In thousands of hectares)

| | Average 1909–13 | 1919–20 | 1920–1 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. *Rye:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 128 | 65 | 72 | 59 | 69 |
| Bucovina | 29 | 18 | 17 | 25 | 20 |
| Bessarabia | 209 | 149 | 99 | 91 | 113 |
| Transylvania | 125 | 83 | 138 | 91 | 61 |
| Greater Roumania | 491 | 315 | 326 | 266 | 263 |
| 3. *Barley:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 534 | 495 | 710 | 873 | 984 |
| Bucovina | 32 | 30 | 33 | 32 | 38 |
| Bessarabia | 672 | 752 | 659 | 682 | 786 |
| Transylvania | 128 | 124 | 168 | 140 | 151 |
| Greater Roumania | 1366 | 1401 | 1570 | 1727 | 1959 |
| 4. *Oats:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 447 | 517 | 661 | 752 | 772 |
| Bucovina | 47 | 28 | 36 | 35 | 48 |
| Bessarabia | 72 | 197 | 249 | 313 | 277 |
| Transylvania | 309 | 224 | 293 | 233 | 259 |
| Greater Roumania | 875 | 966 | 1239 | 1333 | 1356 |
| 5. *Maize:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 2084 | 1888 | 1861 | 1977 | 1966 |
| Bucovina | 67 | 62 | 61 | 52 | 58 |
| Bessarabia | 766 | 714 | 748 | 653 | 664 |
| Transylvania | 991 | 631 | 774 | 722 | 710 |
| Greater Roumania | 3908 | 3295 | 3444 | 3404 | 3398 |
| 6. *Total of the five principal cereals:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 5045 | 3747 | 4465 | 4870 | 4988 |
| Bucovina | 196 | 150 | 161 | 167 | 183 |
| Bessarabia | 2448 | 2383 | 2291 | 2313 | 2668 |
| Transylvania | 2531 | 1720 | 2149 | 2030 | 1821 |
| Greater Roumania | 10220 | 8000 | 9066 | 9380 | 9660 |
| 7. *Total arable:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 5490 | 4050 | 4889 | 5306 | — |
| Bucovina | 313 | 199 | 239 | 233 | — |
| Bessarabia | 2490 | 2515 | 2447 | 2467 | — |
| Transylvania | 3022 | — | 2468 | 2333 | — |
| Greater Roumania | 11315 | — | 10043 | 10339 | — |

YIELD PER HECTARE

(In metric quintals)

| | Average 1909–13 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 | 1923 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. *Wheat:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 12·9 | 8·6 | 10·1 | 10·2 | 11·0 |
| Bucovina | 13·4 | 9·5 | 10·8 | 11·3 | 12·2 |
| Bessarabia | 8·0 | 9·1 | 4·4 | 10·2 | 14·5 |
| Transylvania | 11·1 | 7·0 | 9·1 | 7·8 | 8·9 |
| 2. *Barley:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 10·2 | 11·6 | 8·1 | 12·5 | 12·0 |
| Bucovina | 11·6 | 8·6 | 8·8 | 10·2 | 7·2 |
| Bessarabia | 9·3 | 10·3 | 3·9 | 11·7 | 8·9 |
| Transylvania | 13·0 | 7·8 | 7·3 | 8·6 | 7·2 |
| 3. *Oats:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 9·4 | 11·5 | 9·0 | 10·3 | 6·5 |
| Bucovina | 14·3 | 9·0 | 9·1 | 10·3 | 5·8 |
| Bessarabia | 11·2 | 9·4 | 4·5 | 11·7 | 7·0 |
| Transylvania | 10·9 | 8·2 | 7·5 | 6·7 | 7·0 |
| 4. *Maize:* | | | | | |
| Old Kingdom | 13·1 | 14·6 | 8·7 | 10·3 | 14·6 |
| Bucovina | 13·2 | 16·3 | 10·3 | 12·4 | 13·2 |
| Bessarabia | 11·2 | 14·3 | 7·2 | 9·0 | 12·8 |
| Transylvania | 15·8 | 13·2 | 8·2 | 8·8 | 8·9 |

HUNGARY

1. *Domestic animals:*

(In thousands)

| | 1911 | 1920 |
|---|---|---|
| Cattle | 2148 | 2088 |
| Horses | 895 | 717 |
| Pigs | 3320 | 3314 |
| Sheep | 2406 | 1476 |

These figures are taken from the *Annuaire Est Européen*, published by Oriens, Budapest, 1922, p. 66. The post-war returns are not quite complete, as part of the territory of modern Hungary was still occupied in the spring of 1920.

2. *Sowings of the principal crops:*

(In thousands of hectares)

| | Average 1911–15 | 1919–20 | 1920–1 | 1921–2 | 1922–3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat ... ... ... | 1511 | 1077 | 1091 | 1155 | 1381 |
| Rye ... ... ... ... | 680 | 597 | 555 | 542 | 667 |
| Barley ... ... ... | 525 | 512 | 480 | 457 | 476 |
| Oats ... ... ... ... | 345 | 325 | 326 | 331 | 346 |
| Maize ... ... ... | 859 | 816 | 816 | 694 | 998 |
| Total principal cereals | 3920 | 3327 | 3268 | 3179 | 3868 |
| Potatoes ... ... ... | 242 | 254 | 276 | 189 | — |

The pre-war average is taken from the *Annuaire Est Européen*; the post-war totals come from tables published by the International Institute of Agriculture. The data for 1922–3 are provisional.

3. *Crop returns:*

(In quintals per hectare)

| | Average 1911–15 | 1920 | 1921 | 1922 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat | 13·1 | 9·7 | 11·7 | 10·6 |
| Rye | 11·8 | 8·8 | 10·1 | 10·0 |
| Barley | 13·5 | 9·6 | 9·3 | 9·9 |
| Oats | 12·6 | 10·0 | 9·0 | 9·8 |
| Maize | 17·5 | 15·6 | 8·4 | 11·8 |

The pre-war average is taken from the *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle* for 1923, where the returns are given in quintals per hold.

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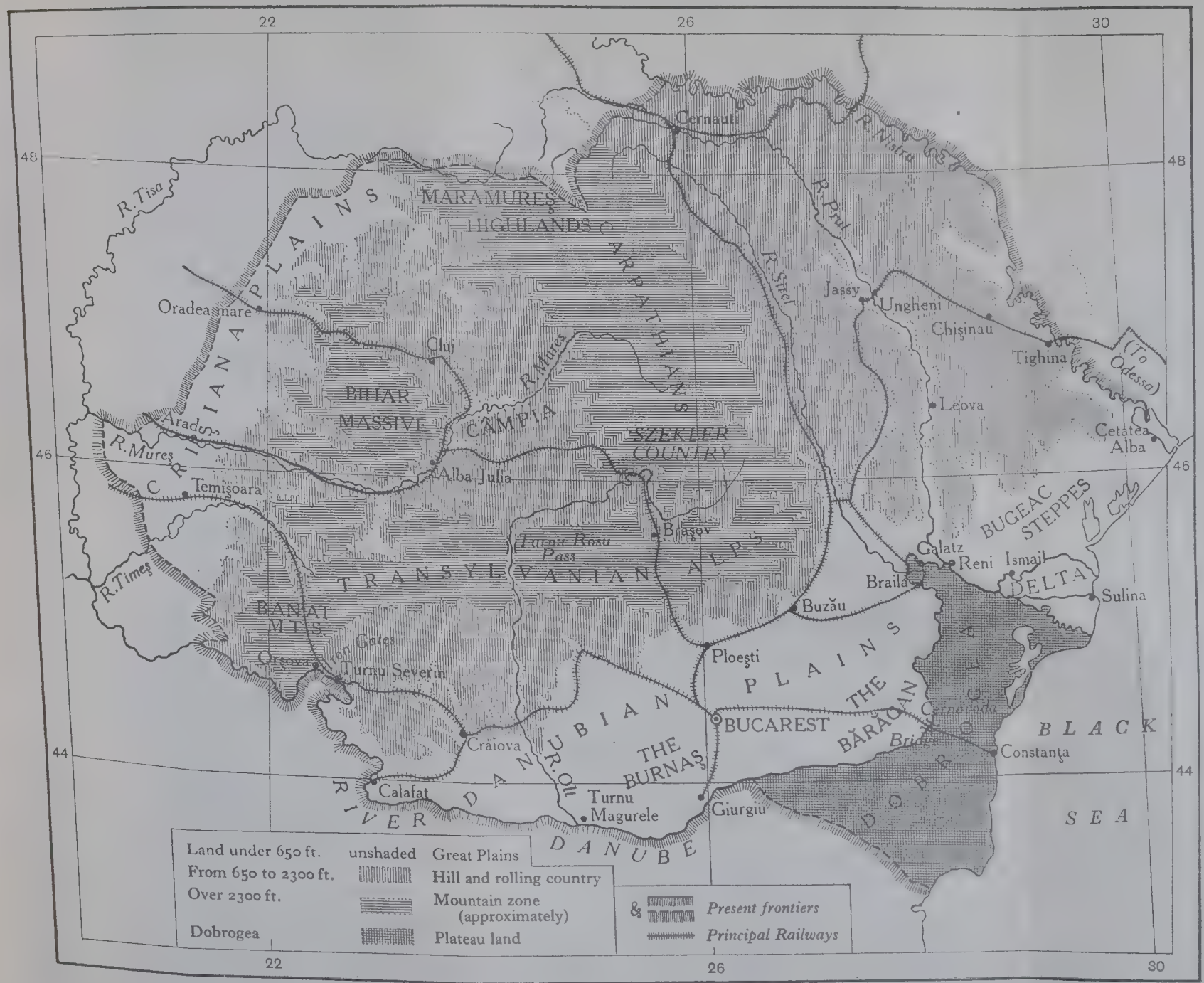


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